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**THE NEW OUTLOOK**



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# THE NEW OUTLOOK

AN IDEAL OF LIFE FOR TO-DAY

*Married thought*

BY

W. P. LIVINGSTONE

AUTHOR OF

'MARY SLESSOR OF CALAPAR,' ETC.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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## THE SITUATION

### NEED FOR A FRESH VISION OF TRUTH

IN the years previous to the war a profound change had been coming over the relation of men and women to the spiritual side of existence. The spread of education and the development of thought had been modifying the attitude of multitudes. Beliefs that had come down from the past had been undermined, and many had been abandoned and nothing put in their place. Science had enlarged our conception of the universe, but it had not told us much about the real meaning and value of things. The best it had done was to give a picture of evolution from the simple to the complex, through struggle and suffering and the exercise of might, of advance from knowledge to knowledge, from problem to problem, from mystery to mystery. The tendency was towards regarding everything outside the range of experience as belonging to a region which had no bearing on our activity from day to day. Speculation and research were beginning to seem useless in view of what appeared to be the inscrutable,

As no one could tell with certainty what the forces were that ultimately governed life, many devoted themselves simply to the interests of the moment. Even those who followed the gleam of the lights that had once shone so clear did so with growing misgiving and doubt.

Yet it was obvious to those who moved amongst men and women that the capacity to believe had never been so strong. Putting aside those who preferred to have no religion of any sort, who looked upon existence as a kind of game in which they were out to win as much for themselves as possible, one found amongst all classes a longing for an ideal that would order their lives aright and hearten them in the thick of the fight. They were ready to acknowledge a Power higher than themselves if only they were able to realise it and reconcile it with the conditions in which they were placed. They were willing to welcome truth and all it involved, if only they knew what it was and what it required them to do. One saw an indication of this in the wistfulness with which each new theory of life was scanned in the hope that it might contain for them a more reasonable explanation of things; in the way they were attracted and thrilled by the promise of any message that seemed charged with an authority above the common. They did not ask for anything elaborate

but only for something that was simple and intimate and practical, something that would enable them to look out clear-eyed upon life and impart to them amidst all its hazards and entanglements a calm and courage greater than their own.

For the lightening of faith had not brought the world any nearer the attainment of happiness and peace. In reality civilisation had never been in such a trouble of unrest. The forces that compose society were in conflict and the outlook was full of menace and the possibilities of tragedy. Men and women had never found life so difficult or feared it so much. It confronted them, veiled and relentless, hiding in its folds potentialities of peril and evil they seemed unable to escape, paralysing them with dread and a sense of their powerlessness and the inevitability of things.

Then came the world-war crashing into the situation like lightning into a surcharged sky. It shook the organisation of society to its foundations, broke down the conventions of life, and brought humanity face to face with the realities of existence. Like all disasters it startled people and made them think. Some it sent inquiringly to a reconsideration of the principles of their faith. It increased the doubt of those who had only a superficial idea of what religion is. 'Why,' they asked, 'if there is a God and He is good, did He

permit so hideous an outbreak of passion involving such waste and suffering? Why, if Christianity be true, could it not have prevented the conflict?' Others stood, confused and perplexed, wondering what it all meant and unable to come to any conclusion that would satisfy their reason. The official exponents of religion believed that men and women in their bewilderment and distress would turn to God: they had dreams of a revival which would fill the churches with repentant, surrendered souls. But no such movement has followed. Whatever may be their thoughts people are outwardly very much the same as before: they seem even more indifferent to the claims of organised religion. A sense of failure has come to the churches: they are realising the fact that in the councils of the world their influence as a spiritual force is almost negligible.

This nevertheless denotes no real change in the relation of people to the essential truths of religion. The war, indeed, has proved how widely the ideals of Christianity have interpenetrated the thought and conviction of the community. Nothing else could have accounted for that tremendous uprush of feeling which risked everything in the interests of the principles of right, and for that outpouring of service, heroism, and sacrifice which has never been paralleled in the history of the world. But



it does mean a fundamental change in regard to the conceptions of religion which have hitherto governed the lives of men and women. They believe that many of the old ideas are wrong ; they suspect that religion is not so difficult and complex and speculative as it has been made out to be ; they are no longer willing to give allegiance to ecclesiastical creeds and dogmas ; numbers have ceased to put faith in those who teach and preach. It is idle to belittle the situation or to decry those who interpret it. The war has intensified it to such a degree that it can no longer be ignored. Millions of young men have been taken out of their normal groove and have, in camp and on battlefield, experienced life at its best and worst, and those who have mixed with them know that they are done with everything that is not real. Thousands of young women have also broken away from tradition and are moving forward on new paths.

There is in a sense nothing strange or new in this development. It is merely an acute phase of a movement that has been at work since the beginning. The same wind blows across the spaces of the earth, and the same sunshine sweetens them, but our natures go on evolving and we never rest in what we believe. At each stage we see farther and better than those who have gone before, and, surer of ourselves, and of what we ought to

be, we require an outlook in correspondence with our position and in harmony with our higher ideas of right and the fitness of things. In other words faith and knowledge have to be continuously adjusted. What we are witnessing is not a revolt against truth but only what is put forward as truth, not a return to a lower standard, but a reaching forward to a higher. Knowledge is in advance of faith and they need to be brought into line.

There is to be reconstruction of many things after the war. Broken humanity has to be healed. New safeguards for peace and freedom have to be devised. Fresh efforts have to be made to solve the problems of social and industrial life. We are entering on an era of reformation and transformation. But before all other things men and women require a fresh vision of truth, a new idea of the spiritual, a higher ideal of religion : not an ideal to satisfy theologians, who are specialists, but one which will appeal to the bulk of ordinary people ; one not to fit in with the old theories but with the truth as we know it to-day. Lacking that, the world will go on in its old way. Forms of organisation may change, but if the character of the spirit behind them remains the same we shall be in no better state.

The urgency of such a new outlook is known to all who are in touch with our young men and

women. In their passionate eagerness for truth and their loyalty to the best, they are trying to grope their way to a clearer view of things and are doing it in most cases with difficulty and alone. They are to be the makers of the future, and unless they go forward with right ideas the nation will suffer in all its activities. To them chiefly this book is addressed. It is not dogmatic but suggestive and illuminative. Its aim is to give in simple, non-theological, non-scientific language an outline of faith based on what is oldest and newest in the world's thought.

The quest for truth, like any other quest, involves adventure and trial. We may be led into regions that seem strange and forlorn. It is hard to pass from paths that have been familiar to us, and especially such as have been hallowed by the pilgrimage of those we love. It is possible that we may suffer. Sometimes the very foundations of belief may seem shaken. In the storms of spirit that may beset us truth itself may appear to be overthrown by the wind, and confidence and joy and hope to be sapped by the beating of the rain. But there is nothing to fear. In the end the air will clear and calm will come, and we shall find that, while much that is useless has disappeared, nothing that is true has been lost, and nothing that is beautiful has been destroyed.



**PART I**  
**THE PRINCIPLES OF LIFE**





## CHAPTER I

### THE AREA OF LIGHT

THE life we live goes back in its origin to a beginning beyond our sight and knowledge. It is linked on to every stage of that drama, so tremendous in its scope and purpose, which has been unfolding throughout the ages. It is the sum of all the processes through which the world has passed. No one can hope to understand the meaning of things to-day unless he has a picture in his mind of what has gone before and knows something of the principles and influences which have been at work.

It is not easy for people to introduce this background of the past into their thought of the conditions of the present. It needs imagination, and our imagination is held in by the demands of the life which plays so insistently around us. We are so absorbed in duties that tax our energy and our time that we have little opportunity or desire to venture outside the range of the sphere which is familiar to us. We move beneath our own bit of sky, amidst the obvious and commonplace, and

are, as a rule, oblivious to what is beyond. There are, we admit, things beyond, but they seem remote and alien, and although sometimes a thought of the strangeness of existence comes to us and we wonder about our position in time and space, we never face the unknown for long, and soon return to the homeliness of what we know. These matters, like the stars, are, we judge, outside our experience and can have no bearing on our faith and life; they are more suited for the study of the philosopher or the laboratory of the man of science.

Yet we cannot form a right conception of life without taking into account the fact that the world has been evolving from the beginning, that it is a vital, growing thing, and that we are part of it and subject to the laws which govern its progress. No religion can be understood until it is studied as a phase in the onward movement. We often begin with a certain period, or with the advent of a great teacher, instead of going back to the foundation of the world; we study theology when we should rather take up a text-book of geology.

To realise something of those laws and forces that have produced and are still moulding the phenomena in which we live and move will give us, what we need, a sense of the perspective of our position. For we are apt to think and act

as if we were first in importance in the universe, and as if our affairs were supreme in its economy, whereas the earth is, relatively, but an atom in what exists, and but an incident in time. If the whole system to which we belong were to be destroyed it would be nothing to the rest of the universe. It would mean simply that the light of a star somewhere in the vastness of space had ceased to shine. No indifference on our part can make the facts of existence less true. No argument can discount their significance. To realise them is to gain humility and reverence and a consciousness of our impotence. And these constitute the first steps towards faith.

What we know depends upon the higher powers we evolve and the use we make of them. Our mind is like a lamp moving in darkness and shedding its rays over a small area. As the quality of the light improves its radius extends. Beyond lies what we call the unknown, because we cannot, in the meantime, get into relation with it. It does not follow that it is not as real as the world around us. What we now know, the things we see and hear and touch, do not set the standard for the universe. Our senses are like so many loopholes facing existence at different angles, but leaving the regions between out of range. What there is between is outside our experience. The

addition of another sense might bring us into contact with a realm of which we have at present no conception.

It follows that there is no 'mystery' in the universe but only conditions beyond our knowledge. What is mysterious to us is so because the light of our mind is unable to explore it and not because it is mysterious in itself. We do not know, for instance, what keeps the stars swinging in space, or what makes our world go round the sun, or what electricity is. These, we say, are mysteries, but they may be explicable to beings of an order higher than we are. We may yet be able to understand them. Much that perplexed people before we came is clear to us and much that puzzles us will be clear to those who follow.

Some make much of the element of mystery in religion: they consider it to be an essential part of faith and resent any attempt to eliminate it. 'Faith without mystery,' they say, 'would not be faith; there must be mystery before there can be faith.' That is to say, faith depends upon ignorance and imperfection. It is true that faith will be necessary so long as our powers are limited, but its presence does not depend upon what is unknown. It is simply belief and trust in what is true, and the clearer we see and the more we know, the stronger and surer it will become.

Many fear what lies beyond the boundary of our knowledge, regarding it with the same kind of feeling that they have for the regions of the earth of which they know nothing. They are so insular that the very thought of other countries gives them a sense of homelessness and loneliness, not being aware that these may be as pleasant and as full of colour and life as their own. When we move over the border of our knowledge into the conditions lying beyond we find that our shrinking from them has been uncalled for, that they are part of the unity of the universe, and add only to our understanding of its order and beauty.

The things that come within the reach of our senses we call normal or natural, and all without, all that our powers cannot reach or test or explain, we name supernatural or supernormal. Both are elastic terms, the one stretching to include new knowledge, the other shrinking as its area is lessened. The line of division between the two is often ill-defined; and until we are able to take in the whole field of existence at one sweep the shadows and uncertainties in our outlook will remain.

It is easy to understand what truth is. It means literally that which is not hidden, that which lies in the light, that which is not clouded

by ignorance or darkened by perversion. In itself it is absolute and final, but we become aware of it only as we advance, and therefore it is what we know of the universe and the laws that govern it and all we have yet to learn. What we have learned and the methods by which we learn it we classify under the name of science. To many, science is the embodiment of unbelief, the enemy of faith, always seeking to undermine the ideas that give us help and consolation; but, viewed aright, it is simply knowledge, the content of what has passed the test of our intelligence, the space that has been cleared in the universe of mystery, the landscape flooded by the light of our mind. It is the field in which the senses operate, where things can be seen or heard or handled or treated with scale and measure. If, then, we find that our ideas do not agree with the facts made clear by science our ideas and not the facts must be wrong, and what we have to do is not to reconcile the revelations of science with our belief but our belief with the revelations of science. It is better also to go all the way science takes us than only as far as we like. We may hesitate because the truths presented for our acceptance are strange, and we wonder how they will affect the ideals and hopes that form the basis of our faith. But nothing that is true can



affect the validity of our faith if our faith be true.

Science does not claim to embody the whole of truth, but only that part of it which it is able to prove and which is subject to laws we can comprehend. It does not restrict the possibilities of knowledge. It admits that wherever it turns in the universe it looks into an abyss of 'mystery.' Its business is to explore this abyss, and it does so uninfluenced by the possible effects of its discoveries on traditional thought. Its sole aim is to determine what is true. Naturally it has, to some extent, to speculate and theorise: occupying a position on ground that is stable and sure it feels for foothold farther on among conditions of which it knows nothing. It may go wrong and have to draw back and try another direction, but on the whole it moves forward. If, however, its conclusions do not pass the tests which it has itself imposed they are of no authority and, from the point of view of its own standard, of no value.

The powers by which science extends the boundary of truth are, in quality and penetration, below the highest we possess. Of the highest it knows as yet little or nothing because they are above the senses which test things. But it uses them although they are not its final court of appeal. It is these swift intuitive powers, the

pioneers of our nature, that make their way first into the unknown, reconnoitring among conditions that are new and strange to an extent greater than the lower powers are willing to acknowledge. The latter are like surveyors and engineers who come up later, verify the discoveries, and reduce things to order.

## CHAPTER II

### VISTAS OF INFINITUDE

BEARING our limitations in mind let us try and form a picture of our position in space. Most of us are apt to think of the universe as a series of compartments, independent and watertight. The sun we regard as one object, the earth as another : plants and animals we place in classes by themselves ; while men and women we consider as apart from all and unallied to any. We speak of matter, life, spirit, mind, and soul, vaguely imagining them to be separate and self-contained, though we cannot define what they are or tell how they came into being. Many assume that there has been creation at intervals, and that in our own case we were made as we now are in an instant of time. This is the only explanation which seems to them to be consistent with the place we hold : it is the belief on which much of the religion of the world has been built.

In reality the universe is a unity. Every part of it and every development of it is linked with the other and the whole. It is not a discord of

phenomena but a harmony that is related and continuous from end to end. What we usually think of, however, is believed to be only a part of what exists. It is complete in itself, but it is associated in some way we do not yet know with a universe that is larger still. The area in which we are placed is so vast that we can only guess at the length and breadth of it without comprehending what our guessing means. We sometimes think of it as a universe of space, but there is no space in the actual sense anywhere. We cannot tell what, ultimately, it is made of. It helps us if we think of grades of existence. There is what may be considered, at present at least, the beginning and foundation of all things, what for lack of a better term we call energy, something that, ultimately, we cannot create and cannot destroy. Next there is a medium, or substance in the ordinary sense of the word, yet so fine and rare that it is difficult for our mind, accustomed only to things that we see, to conceive it. To this has been given the name of æther. More patent than these come what are surmised to be simply a rougher manifestation of æther, the electrons or particles of electricity, revolving in systems, or atoms, like the sun and its worlds in miniature. It is the atoms that form the units of matter which, in combination and in mass, make up all we see. They are,

so to speak, the bricks of which the universe is built. The sun, the stars, the earth, our bodies, the objects about us, are all unions of atoms.

It is not strange that we do not see these elemental worlds. Our eyesight has only a small range up and down the scale of existence and in both directions there are vast areas beyond our reach. The atoms, apart, are below the reach of even the most powerful microscope. Where one, however, cannot be discerned millions can. At a distance we do not perceive any one of the bricks of which a house is built but we see the house itself. As we walk along the seashore we cannot detect the separate grains that compose the sand but the sand itself is plain to the sight and solid to the feet. We may not see a lark in the sky though we know it is there, but if there were multitudes instead of one they would darken the air. In the same way the universe is composed of what is invisible. We may, indeed, from our standpoint, say that it is made out of 'nothing.'

We are accustomed to speak of matter as 'dead,' because it seems quiescent to our eyes. There is, in reality, nothing dead or inert in the universe. All matter is alive with energy and motion and has always been so. The quantity of it also has never varied: as it was in the beginning so it

is now. There have been changes in its forms and new combinations innumerable, but the sum total has never diminished or increased. We may imagine that things go out of existence when they vanish from our view. As we sit by the fire we watch the coals pass away in flame and smoke until only ash is left. But nothing has been lost. The masses of atoms have only collapsed, separated, and passed into other states. It is curious to think that what we see about us, even our own flesh and blood, is made up of material that existed millions of years ago. So true is it that things that are seen are temporary, and the things that are not seen are eternal.

In the shaping and reshaping of matter since time began, we see an effort towards the production of more complex forms. There is a line of advance always threading the activity of things, an impulse which pushes its way onwards and draws to it qualities out of the unknown. Gaps, no doubt, occur here and there which we cannot at present bridge, but these exist only in our mind and may yet be filled in. To this process of development the name of evolution has been given. Evolution to many is almost a faith. They speak of it as something which is able to explain all phenomena, and when they mention it they imagine they have said the last word about exist-

ence. But evolution has no special significance in itself. It does not tell us why things exist, but simply how they have come to assume the forms they now possess. It is not the cause of the universe but the path along which it runs.

Others, again, dislike the idea of evolution, because it seems to do away with the principle of creation and introduces an element which they call mechanical. There is, however, nothing gained by speaking of creation instead of evolution. The difference is only one of method and of name. By creation we infer the making of something, suddenly, out of the essentials of existence. Evolution is the formation of new forms out of these same essentials and is time-long: in other words it is creation, and is as wonderful in its results as acts of creation, as generally understood, would be. Think of an exhibition in which is gathered all the handiwork that the intelligence and skill of humanity have been able to produce—furniture and fabrics, books, paintings, jewels, instruments, mechanism, pottery, articles of gold, silver, and brass, every device ministering to beauty and luxury and utility. All these have come out of the earth, or have formed part of plants and animals, and if it were possible for the process by which they were evolved to be undone, the whole would vanish and only the raw material

remain. We do not know how the results have been obtained ; there are blanks everywhere that our knowledge cannot fill in. Not many, for instance, can tell by what stages the ore out of the rocks has been transformed into the delicate machine used in the laboratory, or how the wool from the back of a sheep has been woven into the daintiness of a woman's gown. But the process, though hidden from our eyes, has occurred, and the fact that it has, takes nothing from the triumph of what we see. It is the same with the universe. The glory of it is not less glorious because it has been gradually evolved. The knowledge of how it has come to be as it is does not detract from the beauty of the result.

The scene of all this energy and development lies in what we call 'darkness.' Light we picture as something that is actually poured out upon us. But it is the effect of a thing and not the thing itself. It is the end of a vibration sent off by electrons in disturbance in the sun and transmitted through the æther. When we drop a pebble into a pool the first ripple creates the second and the second the third, and so on, the last impinging on the shore. None of the ripples has moved out of its place ; it has merely sent on the motion to its neighbour. So each electron passes on the pressure to its neighbour. The



mechanism of the process is invisible because the æther is invisible. There is no light in space : there is none outside of ourselves : there can be none until the vibrations strike upon our sight-sense. In fact all light is, so to speak, invisible. At night we are cut off from the force ; it does not beat upon us and we are, therefore, in shadow. Looking out then we do not see any light in the universe except that intercepted by the moon and deflected and caught again by our earth, and the wave-rays that come direct to our eyes from the stars. Apart from the wave-rays of which we are conscious there are others which do not affect our eyes. Our eyes indeed respond only to a few, and there is therefore a range of existence about which the sense of sight can tell us nothing.

The universe also lies in the grip of cold, so icy, so absolute, that it is difficult to think of it. Heat is produced in the same way as light, the difference lying in the distance between the vibrations in the æther. It is practically invisible light. Unless the vibrations come up against something they do not impart heat. There is no heat in the space between the sun and the earth ; there is only the passing of vibrations which are capable of producing it ; it is when these bombard our bodies that they give us the feeling of warmth. When we walk into the shade they cease, directly,

to influence us. So great is their force, that if it were not for the veil of air resisting and softening them the surface of the world would immediately become scorched and barren. It is the atmosphere also that hinders the escape of the energy they have produced and so saves us experiencing, when we turn out of their path after sundown, all the chill and bitterness of an arctic night.

Poised in the solitudes of the universe are millions of incandescent spheres so immense that figures of their size convey no meaning to our mind. They are billions of miles apart, are of various colours according to the stage they have reached ; and are sometimes single, sometimes in couples, and again in clusters with a complex inter-relation. These are the star-lights that we on earth turn to when we seek for a figure to express the idea of serenity and repose. They are, however, racing along at a speed beyond our conception. Some are moving at the rate of two hundred miles a second, yet since the eye of man first glanced upon them there has been no change apparent in their position. So wide are the gulfs of space that a distance of millions of miles appears to us the breadth of a thread. In addition to these there are countless bodies luminous but invisible to the eye and only caught by the photo-plate, others which are lightless wheeling round the

stars, multitudes of masses of fire-mist which we know to be stars in the making, swarms of meteorites moving in the inter-spaces, and clouds of dust floating everywhere.

Swinging in its own place in the dark splendour of this universe, millions of miles from its nearest neighbour, is the globe of fire we call our sun. By no means the largest of the stars it is larger than we can comprehend. To say that it is a million times bigger than the earth conveys nothing to us. The flames that stream out from its edges are in themselves often one hundred thousand miles in length. It sends forth enough light-waves to illumine billions of worlds like ours, and it gives out every minute as many heat-waves as all the coal in the world could produce if it were ablaze. Why there is so much of what seems to us waste of power we cannot tell.

The sun holds to it by a power we name but cannot understand an assemblage of worlds which revolve, orbit without orbit, to a distance of two and a half thousand millions of miles, our own position being third in order or over ninety millions of miles from the centre. In and out of these flash comets, tenuous and torpedo-like, coming suddenly into view, and as suddenly disappearing into the unseen and unknown.

How came this system into existence? At one

time it is believed—for here we are in the region of speculation—the whole of the area within its compass was a chaos of particles of matter, dark and cold, which in obedience to the energy it contained twisted and spun and became hot and luminous and assumed the form of a spiral. Owing to its own force, or to some influence from outside, parts broke away. These went sweeping round the original body, cooled and grew denser, and some in turn threw off portions of their own substance. The parent cloud shrank eventually to a point when the partition of itself ceased and settled down into what we know as the sun. The others, the planets, ringing it round, pursued their own careers and are now in different stages of existence—gaseous, or red-hot, or solid and habitable like our earth, or nearing the end, or ‘dead.’

The entire system we know is, like the stars amongst which it is placed, hurrying through space. We on the earth are moving in three different ways without being conscious of it. We are whirling round on our own axis at a rate of a thousand miles an hour at the equator; circling the sun at a rate of eighteen miles a second, and keeping up with it in what seems a vast curve at the rate of over twenty thousand miles an hour. And we have been doing this day and night, summer and winter, age after age, since time for us began.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PULSE OF LIFE

THE history of our world has been worked out and we can, in imagination, go back through millions of years, and follow, as if we looked on, the steps by which it has come to be what it is. When it parted from the sun it was itself a sun in miniature. Because it was small it cooled rapidly and eventually a surface formed which stiffened and shrivelled into ridges and valleys as an orange does when it dries. The light gas hovering above condensed, in the same way as the warm breath from our mouths condenses during frost, and fell and filled the hollows and made the seas. At a certain point a compound of atoms appeared endowed with growth at the expense of the matter around it, or, in other words, with the quality which we call life.

The blank between the matter that was not living, and the matter that became alive is one of the gaps we have not yet been able to fill up. We may be inclined, therefore, to think that there is nothing to fill in, that here is a stage in the

process of evolution where a halt came and a new start was made on a higher plane. This is, of course, possible. There may have been an act of creation or a 'leap' in the path of advance. Because we cannot form any idea of how it could happen it does not follow that it did not happen. On the other hand it does not follow because we cannot see anything in the gap that there is nothing there for us to see. Searching back over the past is like looking at a landscape at night with a lantern. We can discern what is in line with the rays of light but not what lies beyond. As our mind advances in power the dark portions too may be illumined. Science has nothing to say on the subject. It stands, thoughtful and speculative, beside its fossils and microscopes and test-tubes, but it cannot pronounce definitely on something which it cannot prove.

In the meantime we can only throw in our lot with the conception that best satisfies our common sense and imagination. We have to fill up the gap as we do the intervals in a play with the facts which are in sequence with the course of the story. The question is whether it was necessary that there should have been any break in the scheme of things. If the sun-mist as it emerged out of the darkness contained all that was sufficient for the upbuilding and peopling of our world,

why should there have been any interference with the plan? If the impulse first imparted was able to carry out the process to the end, why should there have been introduced a fresh impulse while the process was going on? It is curious how far we will go in search of an explanation other than the one which is the simplest and most natural and the one most in harmony with the order of things throughout the universe. Why not believe that there was no lack of continuity: that what we call life was but a higher development of the activity behind all? Special conditions existed in those days and special conditions give rise to special results which never recur. There is nothing contrary to what we know of truth in such an idea. Many may stand aghast at it, for matter has always been considered to be something opposed to spirit though there is no warrant for thinking so except that we have always thought so. The more our intellect evolves and the deeper our insight penetrates into the phenomena of the universe the more we are realising that there is less difference than we have imagined between matter we call non-living and that which is alive. We are obtaining a conception of something that is universal and related, something that is simple and elementary, or intricate and organised, but always 'vital.'

Some men of science apply the word ' automatic ' to the forces of matter, and think that this has brought us to the end of things. There is no reason to be afraid of the term. It takes us no further than we were before. For we do not know what life really is. We say that it is a condition governed by law, but that does not help us. Where there is law there must be something else beyond. The only wise attitude is to wait for clearer light, and meanwhile study the manifestations of what we see.

*Arthur J. Mason* There is no difficulty in following the progress of life after it did come on the scene. The reaction of the compound to the changes around it brought about the cell which may be said to be the ancestor of all living forms, since the only difference between existence then and now is one of complexity of relation. The cell multiplied into cell-colonies which varied in structure, the variations becoming scarcely distinguishable from the organisms we call animal. The development took place both on land and sea, but it was the waters that brought forth most abundantly creatures that had life. At the same time the rim of the earth continued to harden, the rocks were washed down and kneaded and stratified, and crystallised and upheaved by the forces at work above and below, and again and again submerged. There was no haste or



confusion about the process: everything was slow, immeasurably slow, and orderly, and according to law. Through it all life flowed, unfolding itself in two great streams. The plants held on their way, proceeding from strength to beauty and converting the world into the garden we see. But the highest forces gathered in the animals where they concentrated their efforts to produce an ever more intricate and delicate type.

- As we watch the process we see the framework of the body being manufactured and elaborated. We see functions being added and improved or modified to suit the necessities of living, and dividing one class of body from another. We see evolving higher contrivances, or 'senses,' to bring these into wider relation with the world outside of themselves. And above such we see the manufacture of the brain. While the process and its results spread and ramified it was always in this direction that the ultimate advance took place. The brain we know is a mechanism made of millions of cells which are fed by blood-vessels and connected with all parts of the body by means of fibres. It is like an electric battery or power-house. From it comes the energy which is sent along the nerves, as electricity is sent along the wires, to perform the work of the body. Each kind of action is looked after and controlled by its own series of

cells. In the early days the apparatus was simple and crude, but it went on becoming more complicated and capable until it was able to produce some of the phenomena we classify under the name of mind. These appeared fairly low down in the scale of animals and gradually passed into a kind of self-consciousness which took up the tale of progress and increased in quality and range. And then, more ages ago than we can compute, came, in the higher regions of brain, a parting of the ways ; the central impulse flowed in a new channel, and there appeared among the creatures of the forest and the plains the lineaments and look of men and women. What the highest type of animal had in small measure they had in large, while new powers had been added giving them entry into a fuller existence—memory cells, for instance, had been developed to such an extent that they registered and stored up impressions so that a score of years afterwards the record could, as it were, be taken down from its shelf, and what had been seen and heard be again experienced. These human beings had also reason, imagination, aspiration, will, enabling them not only to master the forces on the plane from which they had risen, but to co-ordinate knowledge and become citizens of space and time. These powers have gone on developing until we are able to do things that appear

marvellous even to ourselves. We can weigh and measure electrons, make representations of what we cannot see, and tell to within half a mile per second the rate of speed of a star millions of miles away in space.

Did the impulse to move on cease with the production of the mind? Here, again, the old view differs from the new. The former prefers to assume that there was a break in the course of development, and that the spirit was created specially and apart from the phenomena it is associated with; the latter, as reverently facing the problem, sees no reason for not believing that the movement simply became more intensive and fashioned the highest quality and phase of our being. Spirit, it says, is a product of the mind as much as the mind is a product of the brain and the brain of the body. It is the essence of the mind, the apex so far of evolution, superior to all else and dominating all. It is to the spirit that everything in the past has tended: in it everything in the present centres: from it everything in the future is issuing.

The past out of which we have come explains many of the phenomena in our lives which perplex us. When we faint or lose consciousness, for instance, it is the latest cells that are numbed for a time. Dreams are the cells of memory and imagination at work while the cells which guide the

process are slumbering. When one is 'out of his mind' it is in reality the mind that is out of him. The nerve centres governing thought are paralysed or dead and only the lower qualities belonging to the animal are active.

It throws light also on the origin and nature of our dispositions. These are what we have brought with us out of the stages through which we have passed. Just as our body contains relics of its earlier forms, so our mind bears evidence of the states out of which it has emerged. Cruelty, hate, ill-temper, greed, cunning, all the traits that are repellent to our higher nature, are what prevailed in an existence below our present level of attainment. They may have been natural there but in us they are out of place. They are the mark of the animal. When we speak of people as tigerish, wolfish, serpentlike, owlish, feline, and so forth we may be describing them better than we know.

We may be troubled by the thought that all this seems to lower the dignity of men and women. We have always looked upon ourselves as being a little lower than the angels, and here we see ourselves as only a little higher than the animals. We look back and see a process of evolution from electrons into atoms, from atoms into compounds, from compounds into forms of matter and organised life, and of this we are only a part. But we cannot

escape the logic of facts. We have but to think for a moment to realise how akin we are to all life on the earth. We are the product of the same laws and environment. Like the animals we are governed by the position of the earth in space, by light and heat and hill and valley and ocean. We have the same kind of body, the same functions and instincts. We eat the same food-stuffs. Like animals our quest from day to day is for our mouth: we range the world, as they do the wilds, for food. We subsist as they do on death, for life has to be destroyed to nourish us and enable us to live. Both we and they depend ultimately on the matter around us for existence. Such a fact ought to seem as derogatory as the fact that we have come from animals, yet it does not. Why, then, should we resent the idea that we have ascended from a lower stage?

We cannot sit in judgment on the conditions of the past: we know too little about them. But there is no dishonour in any result produced as part of the development of the universe; it is only our way of looking at things that is wrong. Suppose we were able to convert a handful of dust into an organisation perfect in its mechanism and power of work, and that we could either do this in the twinkling of an eye, or by endowing it with the ability to evolve to the position through a long series of

stages ; and suppose we chose the latter method. Would less be thought of the object because the process was prolonged and continuous ? Surely not. It would rather ennoble it and impart to it an interest and value above what it would otherwise possess. Is it not, then, ■ higher conception of men and women that they have come to the point they have reached by the way of evolution, than that they began their career and continued it as we find them now ? The one view gives us hope for the future, because of the height to which we have risen and what we have achieved ; the other would cause us to despair because it would make us still very much what we were at the beginning. After all, it does not matter by what path we have gained our estate. The origin and the method are not so important as the result, for it is the result that counts.

In space, then, we occupy a position between the region of the unseen and the seen, both stretching away beyond our vision : and in time between a past and a future which are lost in the immensities of the unknown. We are links in a chain of evolution which fills the whole of this space and spans the whole of this time. Our existence is confined to but ■ small part of them and we may be said to be only at the beginning of our career. The length of our wayfaring upon

the earth so far may be likened to the single throb of a pulse in the life of a man. Millions of years lie before us, though the end must come as the beginning came. In one sense the earth, like other side issues of development, is complete. It has still some of its ancient fire left, but it depends now for the most part on the energy of the sun. The wind and the clouds and the rain, the rivers and the oceans, are still doing their work as it rolls swiftly and silently through space, but it is the sun that sends them to their task. If the influence of it were withdrawn the world would be plunged into a state in which all life would perish. The constituents of matter would remain, but the conditions under which their evolution was being accomplished would be gone. So long, therefore, as the sun lasts the process will continue. It is itself but a stage in the larger drama of evolution, and is spending its energy at a given rate, but it is so large and its temperature is so high, that we cannot conceive of a time when it will cease to affect its planets. When the end for our system comes it will not mean the end of everything, but only the end of the cycle in which our development is taking place. It may imply the beginning of a new condition in our part of space. For there is neither beginning nor end but only change.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POWER RESPONSIBLE

*Good*

WE have reached a point where we can look beyond the surface of things, and consider the force that orders and controls them. It is clear to our common sense that there must be such a force, for there can be no organisation without an organiser. An existence which has evolved from chaos into the life we know must have something superior to it. There must be, behind the pageantry of the universe, a power that is responsible for it. We may, at different stages of our culture, think otherwise, but we always come to this belief in the end.

It is useless to say that we cannot understand the nature of such a power. There are many things which we know to exist but of which we can form no idea. The verdict of science indeed is that our lives are ruled by forces of which we know nothing. Some of the phases of nature most familiar to us are beyond our capacity to grasp. We see their effects, but our minds are a blank when we try to shape an impression of what



lies behind. Yet we know that there is something behind. It is equally useless to dismiss the existence of such a power as incredible. We live in the midst of the incredible. We cannot account for anything or say why it is as it is. It is incredible to us that the earth should be racing through space. It is incredible that our bodies should be composed of the same matter as the sun. It is unimaginable that invisible particles should give off vibrations that are able to convey messages for us thousands of miles. Yet these things are so. The process of evolution is incredible, yet we are living witnesses of its operation. To state that the idea of a power behind the phenomena of the universe is incredible is only to confess how meagre and limited are the qualities we possess.

The only way by which, of ourselves, we can prove the reality of a power supreme above all is to judge from the influence it exerts within the range of our knowledge. We can then be sure that it exists although it is beyond the reach of our senses. We know the story of the discovery of the planet which, as far as we are aware, forms the outermost member of our system. Astronomers noticed that the movement of Uranus was affected by something beyond it and beyond their observation, and came to the conclusion

that it was acted upon by a body further out in space ; and so, in time, it proved, and Neptune was added to the list of our sun worlds. We have the same reason for believing that nothing can account for our universe save the existence of a power beyond it.

How are we to define this power ? As a principle, or force, unconscious, impersonal, automatic ? Such a conception will take us no further than we have come, and unless we can get further we may as well give up the quest. Faith in a power that is, at its best, but a process of mechanism will not help us to live our life. But mere force cannot explain or account for intelligence, and our intelligence cannot enthrone what is lower than itself as lord of the universe. Even at the worst that which is responsible for the universe must, in the nature of things, be superior to the highest influence we know. Our ideas of it naturally rise no higher than the highest level we have reached, and that is not very far. It is just what we think it is. But it is much more than we have ever dreamt of, and only as our spirit evolves are we becoming conscious how remote from our loftiest conception are the power and wonder and glory of the reality.

Our difficulty is to find words in the language we have evolved to describe even what comes within

the range of our spirit. The coinage of expressions does not keep up with the conquests of thought and we have to adopt terms that have been worn by use in another and lower sense. They do not express the exact nature of the phenomena on the higher plane, but in the absence of others we have still to make shift with them.

Of the supreme power, therefore, we say that it must possess what we call consciousness and personality and will and be perfect in all its attributes and master of all that exists. If this be so it follows that it has a relation to us who are the products of its intelligence. Here we can only draw on the imagery of earth, poor as it is, for an analogy which can give definiteness to our idea. The feature that impresses us as the most universal and significant in the economy of the world is that of the home. All homes are not ideal, but the one that is so will be found to be governed by parents both good and wise, and to be the abode of law and order and love and peace. In it we see a reflection in miniature of the greater truth. The position of the Supreme Power cannot be less than that of a father and mother on earth. The universe, we may take it, is a home at the head of which is One who combines the qualities of parents, the love of the mother, the authority of the father, the care and tenderness of both. It

is perhaps natural that He should have been hitherto regarded as a father only, for the father has, for various reasons, always occupied the chief place in a family. But the Supreme Power is not fashioned by our ideas. He does not belong to the system of the earth, and He appeals equally to men and women and realises and meets all conditions and needs. He is, so to speak, not only the father, but also the mother of all.

Our relation to Him is all that is included in the term religion. To most of us religion is a formula of belief and membership in a society carried on in accordance with it. But by adopting a creed and following the practices associated with it we do not necessarily fulfil what is involved in our relation to the Supreme Power. Nor does it follow that by rejecting the creeds and refusing to ally ourselves with organisations we get rid of religion. Religion in the right sense is not a system which we established. We are not responsible for it. It has existed ever since we have been conscious of a power higher than ourselves. It is not what we think of the Supreme Power but the relation of each one of us to Him, a tie that is individual and direct and cannot be broken. It may be ignored. A son may repudiate his parents, but that does not destroy the bond of nature between them. Our very existence is

proof that we have a connection with the Highest which cannot be severed. Others have no power over this relation. They may influence us and seek to dominate us but no third person can come, in any capacity, between us and the Supreme Father.

Religion is universal: it does not belong to this or that nation or class, or to this individual or that; it belongs to every man and woman, the humblest as well as the highest in station. It is like our relation to the air or the sun. It is so simple that it can be understood by every one. What passes for it is so difficult and contradictory that it needs specialists to interpret it. But true religion is not a creed or code of philosophy. It is simply a relationship, an attitude, the same as that which children have to their parents; a living in harmony with the will and purpose of the Power responsible for our existence. We sometimes hear of a 'new' religion, but no religion can be new. We may get to understand our relation to the Supreme Power better, but that means clearer vision in ourselves and not a change in the relation. A 'new' religion probably means nothing more than a new interpretation of truth.

## CHAPTER V

### LOVE AND LAW

As God, the Supreme Power, is responsible for all that exists He is responsible for the method of it. To understand better what this implies let us revert to our illustration of the home. It is the influence of the parents that creates the atmosphere and permeates all its life and movement. This influence, which we do not see but which is so potent, we take for granted and accept as one of the things that cannot but be as it is. We give it the name of Love, a word often misapplied, but which in its right sense represents the highest form of energy in our lives, a force as real and active as any of those we call material. So in the larger home. God is love, we say, and express more than we realise. The love of God is, indeed, something finer, more subtle, than energy as we understand it. It is to our higher nature what sunshine is to the lower: it is the love-light or natural element of the spirit without which it cannot live. It is the influence which underlies all right activity and all progress.

In a home also the parents may appear to do little ; there may be few signs of their direction and care, but it is their rule which orders everything. So the rule of God may not be obvious, but it is at work everywhere. We call it law. Law simply means the conditions according to which love expresses itself. Love and law are the great facts of our existence, not distinct and independent but one, a two-fold force, which for the sake of convenience we may term love-law. Evolution is what takes place when we submit to the love-law, the survival of the fittest not by struggle and pain but by obedience to the 'pull' of the influence at the centre of things. It is like an endless life-line running through existence ; if we grasp it and yield ourselves to it, it will draw us onwards into higher forms of being.

The love of God has never altered : neither has the law which serves it. Only the object is mutable : the love-law is immutable. We sometimes hear of a new law, but no law can be new. What happens is that it has come within the range of our knowledge ; in other words, that our nature has risen into a region where we have a vision of higher conditions of existence. Otherwise we should have to suppose, what is out of the question, that as the world evolves new laws are also evolved, or that the Supreme Power introduces them

specially from time to time. What we call laws, however, are nothing but our own ideas of the principles controlling things. They do not necessarily coincide with the love-law of God.

The problem of life for most people is that there seem to be two sets of laws, the one good and the other evil. We think of the latter dogging the footsteps of men and women, and fighting for mastery in nature and in ourselves. This idea has always influenced the thought and literature of the world and yet it has no basis in truth. No one with intelligence would make a piece of mechanism and give it a law to work in one way and a law to work in another. There is only one paramount power and He is a power for good. There is only one law, the love-law, in operation throughout the universe. We may not know much of it; what we know may be only its manifestation on our lower plane, but it exists now as it always has done and ever will do in fullness and perfection.

It is strange, how, while we speak with awe and reverence of the universe as a whole, we have a dread of that part of it which we label 'nature,' and the laws that play in it. Nature is looked upon as ruthless, terrible, cruel, and opposed to super-nature. But if all that exists is, ultimately, the handiwork of God, the laws with which He has



endowed it cannot be contrary to His character or inimical to His influence. We have got into the habit of using words like natural, material, mechanical, in connection with the phenomena of the universe, as if they referred to something lying outside the domain of the Supreme Power. In reality there is no natural law in the sense of a law independent of other law; what we call natural law is simply what, in our sphere, we have learnt of the love-law. The laws of the universe are the commandments of God.

What then is evil? It is not a law but a condition: not a cause but an effect. It is the state into which we pass when we disobey the law of our existence, when we fall below the standard of right we have attained. It does not exist until the law has been resisted or broken; it is in other words a lack of harmony with the conditions of our being, a disturbance of the balance of the universe. Specifically it is the moving of the old animal tendencies within us in opposition to the ideals we have developed. It is the shadow of imperfection, for good that is absolute casts no shade. There is consequently no evolution of evil but only of good. The higher we rise the lower we may fall, but we cannot go deeper than we have come. On the other hand the heights of attainment still lie unscaled before us.

Of the period before we came on the scene we can say nothing ; we do not know what place in the scheme of things the sub-human career of the world had, or what purpose it fulfilled, though it must have had its meaning. Evil has, in a way, always existed, since anything out of harmony with the laws governing it is in the state we call evil. An infant knows nothing of evil in the conventional sense, but it has a feeling of ill-being when it is out of correspondence with the conditions bearing upon it. It has been the same from the beginning. We know that there is no evil, as we understand it, where there is no self-knowledge and no responsibility. For us it did not exist until we arrived at a consciousness of our relation to a higher power. The moment that happened a standard of right was created, and every man and woman, no matter how low in the scale of evolution, had a sense of responsibility, however poor. When they fell below their standard evil existed. This was the 'fall' which the old historians sought to symbolise in a picture-story. They knew that each of us falls when, conscious of what we ought to do, we do what is wrong.

Naturally we are responsible only up to the extent of our evolution and knowledge. We do not hold the people of the past responsible for

not living up to a standard of which they had no conception. They occupied their own position in the scheme of development, and had their own responsibility but on a lower plane. So with us : as teachers of all time have taught, our ignorance is not evil when we have faith and obey the law as we can know it. The more we know, the greater our responsibility. To whom much is given of them much is required. It is a law of life.

It may be said that this view makes the savage as good in his way as the saint. What necessity is there therefore for seeking to elevate him? why not leave him to the light he has and by which he will be judged? He is not, of course, as good as a saint any more than a dog is as good as a savage. If we are obedient to the love-law and in line with the purpose of the universe we are part of the evolving force, and cannot but do for those lower than ourselves what God is doing for us. We cannot help influencing and uplifting others; it is a service which is part of the order and tribute of our being.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FLAMING SWORD

IF the love-law were never broken evil would not exist. By obeying it therefore, by keeping within the sphere of perfect action, we could eliminate evil from our life and bring about the state of harmony and happiness which it is our destiny to enjoy.

Many may greet such a statement with a smile. They will say that such an ideal is impossible of achievement. Perfection is an idea which has no relation to life as we know it. Even followers of the teacher whose command was, 'Be ye perfect,' declare that it is one of the things unattainable by men and women as they are at present constituted. But what does such an attitude mean? It implies that the scheme of the universe is imperfect and that nothing is capable of being perfect until some indefinite end has come. This no doubt is true from one point of view. Evolution is progress and the moment we attain, within the limit of our capacity, we find new vistas opening up, so that it may be said that we are never perfect

but are always reaching forward to a closer approach to the Supreme Power. It is when our spirits are most in tune with the love-law that we feel the possibility of larger experience bearing in upon us from the infinite. But the very fact that perfection is relative shows that we can attain to it at any stage of our existence, for there is at every stage a relationship to God, a standard of accomplishment, which is perfection to us. There are men and women who achieve this in their lives and who enjoy a felicity of being that is, to them, perfection.

This brings us to what is, to all, the problem of problems—the existence of pain and sorrow. What bewilders us is the prevalence of things that are cruel and bitter and apparently meaningless. Life is full of disease and suffering and martyrdom. We know those who are sweet and innocent and who yet endure torture of body and mind, men and women of all classes who are tormented in strange ways, in the face of the world, and in secret and alone. We see an accident in the street and catch a glimpse of bodies being borne away, or go home and find a child struck down by illness. We open our papers and find tidings of a great disaster in which hundreds have perished. And we wonder and rebel at what appears to be the injustice of it.

According to the old idea anything that happens to us is a 'dispensation' of the Power controlling our lives and is intended as discipline to chasten and humble us, or to bend us to His will. That is to say, He stands over us like a slave-driver, whip in hand, and governs us and shapes our destiny by the terror of pains and penalties. Sometimes when a calamity has happened people may be heard to say, 'It is a judgment on us.' There are even those who, when some loved one has suffered or died, accept it as a personal punishment and sit down in sackcloth and ashes. Why others should be penalised for our sake: why we should not suffer for our own misconduct: why if there is such a system in operation it should be so isolated in action—for most of us need rousing to a sense of our duty—is not clear to any one with a sense of logic and fair play. But the universe does not contain such a principle. It is governed by justice and God does not act in this haphazard and capricious way. There is no necessity for Him to act as a taskmaster. The universe is ruled by His law and the character of our lives depends on whether we keep it or violate it. If we obey it we are immune from harm; if we disobey it we suffer. Our own law, such as it is, reflects the perfection of God's. If we keep it we run no risk and incur no penalties,

and we are safe-guarded by it and protected from hurt. The law of God cannot be less just.

Our lives, therefore, are what we make them. Health and happiness and peace are the effects of obeying the love-law. Illness, disease, pain are the effects of lack of correspondence with it; violation of it; in other words, they are evil. This will be clearer if we bear in mind the oneness of our organisation. We know little as yet of the relations and inter-relations of body, mind, and spirit, but we know enough to be sure that they are linked together and that what affects one reacts on the other. We also know that everything we do leaves its mark on our nature for good or ill. Our thoughts and words and acts do not pass away: they produce results which are never undone. Moment by moment we are weaving the web of our destiny. When we suffer in any way we may in our ignorance or stupidity be unaware of the cause; even if we try honestly to recall the nature of our lapse we may be unable to lay a finger on it. That does not prove that no trespass has been committed. It may lie far back among the months and years and beyond our sight and knowledge, but it is there. The law has been infringed and the result is working itself out. It may not be one act, it may be many, and the suffering may be the issue of them all.

The transgression may not even exist within our own life; it may be more remote, and we may not be responsible. Sometimes we are unable to account for a trick of speech or gesture we have until we search back several generations and discover it in an ancestor. So with suffering. If we were able in every case to trace the course of it we should come at last to its source and find a broken law.

This inevitability of consequence, this entail of retribution, is one of the great facts of existence which it is not possible to minimise or explain away. However indifferent people may be to it they cannot get rid of their accountability not only to themselves but also to others. For all human life is related. Our acts do not end with ourselves. Their influence extends indefinitely beyond their personal and immediate effect. They are, in truth, never effaced. Everything wrong that we do in some way, directly or indirectly, affects others. It may be what is considered a minor fault, but no matter how trivial it is, it reacts on those who are in contact with us, and through them on more than we know. How lasting are the impressions one receives even casually, is shown by the way in which chance words and incidents will embed themselves in our nature. Women in asylums, whose previous life has been



to all appearance blameless, sometimes shock their attendants by profanity. It is not that they have been guilty of the vice; some time in the past they must have accidentally heard the words which from their very strangeness imprinted themselves on their mind; when the higher powers ceased to control their volition the language came without restraint.

Each of us therefore is also weaving the larger web of life around us and affecting the community as a whole. Take an ordinary case. A man begins the day in temper—itself traceable to violation of the law. He is cross with his family, leaves his wife with a shadow on her face, and the children silent and sad. These, depressed, go out and their manner influences others; these again influence their own friends, and so the little ripple of evil goes on. The man may spoil the day for his comrades or subordinates in shop or factory and may end it with an altercation, and bitter words, and a rupture that may disturb the harmony of hundreds in the course of its widening action. The results of graver breaches of the law pass on in the same way. We may spread disease and suffering and sorrow and death. Those still unborn may be affected for evil. Cases are known where two people, irresponsible and vicious, have produced generations of their like, all dissolute

and criminal, who have cost the State a large sum of money and caused endless suffering and misery.

Many people who are willing to recognise the bearing of such facts would not care to extend the principle underlying them to other than infractions of the moral law. It operates, however, right through existence. Disobedience of the laws regulating life on what we regard as the lower planes of our lives are as sinful and as vital and lasting in their effects. Inefficiency, carelessness, thoughtlessness, slackness are violations of the love-law. It is these, indeed, which we do not think of as 'sins,' that give rise to much of the trouble and worry and strain in life. Faults that seem trivial may start a chain of evil. They may reach the end of the world. An explorer tells us how on the journey to the Antarctic, his vessel, which was specially prepared for the work, was discovered to be leaking. It was docked and a searching examination made, but when it was again afloat the defect persisted. It was docked once more at great expense, but every effort failed to find the leak. One of the craftsmen who had been engaged to make the vessel as perfect as possible, had scamped his work and by his act condemned the explorers to many a weary hour of labour at the pumps. The incident is typical of what takes place hourly in every sphere of

activity. That we have a glimmering of the truth is shown by the fact that when serious accidents happen, an inquiry is held in order to fix the responsibility on the person who may be to blame. But not always seeing far enough we are sometimes inclined to say, 'It could not be helped, it was a pure accident,' as if things happened by chance in a universe of law.

We do not know much about the connection we have with what we call the physical matter below us, but some subtle tie still links us to it. When a disaster occurs, an earthquake, or volcanic eruption, or cyclone, and thousands are killed, many wonder how it can be reconciled with the goodness of God. We must not forget, however, that thousands die every day deaths as sudden and as strange. They do not come in bulk before our mind, and we can think of the sum total of them without horror. Yet there is in reality no difference between the death of one and the death of many, for all must die, and if we knew more and saw further, we should realise that it is not death or the manner of it that is of importance, but the character of the life it closes. But it must be more than a coincidence that these events have usually been associated with conditions of evil in the districts affected. There may have been many among the victims who fulfilled the

laws of life but the balance was against them. It is as if such spots had been forsaken by the higher influences and left to the operation of elemental forces. There are regions of the earth where severe weather has always been experienced which have secured a milder climate by settlement and cultivation, but if they are deserted by humanity the old conditions come back. So with the haunts of higher activity. There are places where the spirit feels an atmosphere of evil bearing in upon it, a sense of debasement and lawlessness which wounds and stifles it like an invisible miasma. The spiritual has been banished and men and women live on lower planes without protection from the physical powers that environ them. The same principle may also be watched at work in the career of nations. We see them dwindling away and disappearing because of their corruption and lawlessness, and though the process may be spread over a century or more it is as much physical and catastrophic as the disaster of a moment. In their case also the innocent suffer along with the guilty. But God is not to blame for any of these disasters. They are the result of men and women going deliberately in the face of His love-law.

Suffering, therefore, is the hall-mark of disobedience. If we break our own law the punish-

ment meted out to us is counted a degradation, and why if we break the higher law should it not be considered a worse degradation? Many physicians are beginning to regard it in this light, and the time will come when we shall all do so: when disease and pain will no longer be thought of as accidental and unpreventable, but will be looked upon as evidence of revolt against the order and harmony of the universe. The only question will be as to who is primarily to blame.

But, it may be said, if God established the law He must have created the penalty, and is therefore responsible for the pain. This kind of reasoning is not on all fours with that which we apply to our affairs from day to day. When our law is broken and the offender goes to prison, he does not as a rule connect his punishment with the legislators who made the law but with his own act. Yet we blame God for the consequences of what we have done in opposition to the law He has established. We can, of course, rail at Him for establishing it, but nothing is more futile and foolish. We do not know why the universe has been made as it is, but it is impossible for us to conceive of it conditioned in any other way. Suppose that the law were such that we could not but obey it, that we were compelled to be perfect in spite of ourselves—we would be machines,

without volition, and life would have no dignity or value. As we are constituted we have freedom of will and responsibility, and power to live the perfect life if we choose. The universe is based on love, but without the element of law, of justice in it also it would go to pieces.

Neither have we a right to blame God for our ignorance of the law. Each age has its own knowledge of truth and what it involves. Each man and woman is always able to realise what is right. In the case of our own law ignorance is not accepted as an excuse for evil-doing, and all citizens in the kingdom of the love-law know what they should and what they should not do. At any rate, it is their own fault if they do not. If we devoted as much time to the study of our relation to the Supreme Power and His law as we do to things less important we should never be in any difficulty. There is nothing more amazing than our indifference to the necessities of the love-law, our neglect and defiance of even the elementary facts of being. Even a little more attention paid to the principles of hygiene would avert much suffering. A more careful management of the body and brain would often alter the course of history and affect for good the destiny of millions. But we walk through life with eyes on the ground oblivious to the flaming sword

that seeks to keep us right, and then we sob and rebel when, on our going wrong, it cuts deep into the flesh.

Is the effect of lawlessness, then, unmitigated and irremediable? We come back to the symbol of the home. When a son breaks away from the love and rule of his parents and suffers, and then returns, the love is there and the suffering is there, but there is also the ministry and healing. In the same way the love-law of God contains within itself the cure for the suffering occasioned by its violation. We have some idea of this, because we frequently say, 'Leave the cure to nature,' 'nature will take care of itself,' and so on. What we vaguely call nature is in reality the love-law. It is always seeking to restore the harmony that has been interrupted. We never realise how tender and merciful it is, how patient and long-enduring, how urgently it warns us when we trifle with it, how many chances it offers us of retrieving ourselves before we have gone too far, how faithfully and ceaselessly it works to repair the damage when damage has been done. We even misinterpret its action. What we look upon as the symptom of disease, is often not the disease but the attempt of the love-law to cure it. The body contains a multitude of cells which form a kind of defence force. When the law has

been broken and there has been a disturbance of the balance of being these set to work to resist the effects of the evil that has been done. A cold, for example, is the effort of the body to throw off a poison : it is a process of cure. So is inflammation ; it is an indication that the fight is severe. Physicians now seek to reinforce the agencies of defence by every means in their power. But sometimes the system has been so weakened by lawlessness that the army is too impoverished to win the victory and the body goes under.

In the end we come to see the profound significance of suffering in relation to our spiritual development. It is a protective principle in our lives ; safeguarding us from ourselves, saving us from moral anarchy. It has in it an element of discipline, of purgation, of cleansing. Like the touch of fire it refines and purifies ; it makes us realise the nature of the law, so just, so inflexible, and, if we are wise, it shapes us to nobler living. It will diminish as we appreciate more clearly the meaning and method of it, and as we seek to apply our knowledge to the ordering of our lives.



## CHAPTER VII

### IN TOUCH WITH THE UNSEEN

MANY are willing to admit everything up to this point but will not go further. The idea they have of the universe is of a system, perfect and beautiful in itself, but lacking the 'personal' touch of the Supreme Power. There is, they say, no necessity for Him to do anything under the conditions He has established, and as He does not interfere with the operation of His law, they relegate Him to a distance somewhere in the darkness of the infinite and act as if His relation to them were passive. They walk through life alone trying anxiously to make the most of it but relying solely on their own powers. That is to say they conceive of Him as they think He must be. But we have seen how limited is our range of vision, how poor is our knowledge of what is beyond ourselves. We set up an idea which so bars our way that we cannot get past it.

Let us return to our illustration. In a home there is, as we have seen, a system of law and order, and an atmosphere of love and influence.

But there is, in addition, the intimate personal association of children and parents. The children approach the parents, speak to them, tell them their aspirations and troubles and ask for their advice. The parents listen and respond. They do not interfere with the rules they have established for the guidance of the home: everything goes on as it was arranged it should do, but this does not prevent them helping the children whenever it is needful. They may not accede to all the requests which the latter make, but they grant those that are in line with their government and policy. It makes no difference to their attitude if a son or daughter fails in duty and passes beyond the range of their authority: they are always ready to welcome them back and restore them to the old relation.

Less than this is not done in the home of which ours is the pale reflection. Our mistake is to take too low a view of the universe and the Father, and His position and love. We have the same right to come to God as a child has to come to his father. It does not matter that we cannot see Him face to face. We know there are things in life which we cannot see and yet are as real as those we do. We know that the region of spirit is so rare that we cannot appreciate it with our ordinary senses. But we can get into touch with God as surely as

we can with our parents. The nature of the process is indeed much the same: it is part of the mechanism of the universe and is capable of proof by tests as valid as those applied to conditions on what we call the physical plane.

We are apt to think that communion of spirit is dependent on nearness of body, because people cannot hear us speak unless they are within range of our voice. But speech is not thought. It is only a medium for expressing it, and not the only one. We often convey thought in other ways, by writing, or drawing, or touch, or even by the flash of an eye. People who are deaf and dumb and blind are able to express their meaning to others. Nor do the methods we know set the limit to attainment. This is shown by the fact that we are always improving and supplementing them. A century ago it was impossible to make our voices heard over a distance of several miles, but we have now the telephone. Not so long ago one would have been laughed at if he had said that we should be able to convey our thought over thousands of miles without an intervening agency, and yet we do so now by wireless telegraphy.

We are not aware of all the methods of communication there are in the universe, but we find in those within our knowledge an ascending scale of quality. Touch is the basis of all and all are in a

*Indwelling*

sense touch. Taste, for instance, is nothing but touch: smell is a touch still finer. Hearing is also touch; it is the result of the vibration of the air. The force that brings us the wireless message is touch. Sight again is the rarer impact of the particles of æther. We have also the X-rays which are able to penetrate matter that is opaque—they are waves of touch. Still more intangible is the radiation of mind waves, the waves from one brain impinging on another as voice waves break on another ear. Lastly there are spirit-waves, the highest form of touch of which as yet we have knowledge, and the most marvellous of all. This is the medium which brings us into relation with the source and centre of all things. It is not strange for us to be able to come in this way into touch with God. Even if it were a question of His distance from us, which it is not, there is no difficulty in granting the possibility of it. The fact is as certain as if it had been proved by science. It is just as natural to talk to God as it is to talk to a friend face to face or over a wire. Indeed, if one can reach over and touch another or can speak to him across an intervening space, he has proved it, for it is only a question of the delicacy of the instrument and the quality of the force.

But there are conditions and much depends on

the character of the spirit. No message has any efficacy on earth unless there is an instrument to send it, and one to receive it, and both are in tune. It is the same on the higher plane. If we are in the kingdom of God and within range of His influence, our spirits are able to come into contact with Him. Even then much depends on the state of our relation at the time. A change of temperature alters the speed of æther-waves. Fog deadens sound-waves, while the air of a city does not convey them so clearly as the clean spaces among the hills. If the atmosphere of our spirit is befogged by evil or thick with the dust of the world the power of the spirit-force is lessened. The purer the conditions the better the communication.

On the other hand those who deny God, who live lawlessly, who have placed themselves outside His kingdom, whose spirits are atrophied, have no instrument with which to send messages to Him and are, therefore, out of touch with Him. It is not His will or fault: the failure rests with them. It is not God who denies Himself to them, but they who have placed themselves out of correspondence with Him. There is a receiver but no apparatus for sending the message.

Do we wonder how it is possible for the countless communications addressed to God day by day to be received and dealt with? A large

number, however, are formal and ineffective : mere tapping on keys which transmit no message ; they fall short, as it were, in space. But there are multitudes which find Him. How it is accomplished we do not know ; and it is little wonder that we do not, when we consider how ignorant we are of the processes in the lowest fields of existence. What is certain is that He does hear and that He does answer in line with the laws He has established. He responds to the most insignificant individual amongst the millions of the earth. Why not ? He cares for our universe of suns, but He also cares for every atom within it.

When our relation to the Father has been broken it is the easiest thing in the world to restore it ; in other words to secure what we call forgiveness for our waywardness. Forgiveness is conditional but it is automatic. 'God will never forgive me' is the cry of men and women when they fall by the way. It is like saying that the sun will never shine for us when we put ourselves out of its rays. If we continued in such a position we would soon become ill and waste away, as a plant withers in the same circumstances. The moment we return to the sunlight, into the conditions of life and growth, we revive. It is the same in the sphere of spirit. God is the source from which we draw our spiritual life and strength.

If we violate His law we cut ourselves off from His light. We retire into the dark. But He is still shining, and all we have to do is simply to come back into relationship with Him.

Is there more? Does God actually help us and heal our suffering and sorrow, free us from the haunting terrors of body and mind, protect us from hurt and ill? We cannot doubt it. There are always the forces of the love-law at work combating the effects of evil, and seeking to restore the balance of nature whenever it has been disturbed. It is chiefly with the lower agencies of these that physicians work. But above and behind the phenomena of the Seen there is the personal power of God, pitiful and tender, working with higher forces of which we know nothing on behalf of those who love and serve Him. What He does only those know for whom it is done. It may seem marvellous but it is not 'miraculous' or in opposition to the scheme of the universe. We have no conception of the length and breadth of His law; if we had we should find that all His dealings with us are in harmony with it. The more we advance the more we shall realise that everything is as simple and natural as that which has already passed the test of science.

*Immortality*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PASSING OF THE SPIRIT

WE have been dealing with our position and responsibility during the course of our sojourn on earth, but what is of even more interest to us is our position after it is finished. If matter, life, and spirit are phases of one manifestation do they not go down to a common fate, becoming resolved into the substance of the world, and entering again into new forms? Many believe they can come to no other conclusion. Life to them is simply a matter of mechanics. As far as they can penetrate into the phenomena of the universe they see evidence only of the mechanism of matter, electron within atom, cell within cell, force within force, automatic and inevitable. There is persistence of type but not of the individual. They point to the procession of the ages, the millions of men and women, race after race, nation after nation, who have come and struggled and passed away; and to the millions who will follow, with all the expenditure of feeling and aspiration and effort which they represent, and they say that



these merely contribute to the production of some ultimate form of existence of which we can have no knowledge. When that form appears, the outcome of æons of travail, it will stand on a world of human dust, and all the satisfaction that the Supreme Power will get out of His scheme will be that the end has come and that it is good.

Such a theory appeals in vain to our common sense. To be stepping-stones on which life passes onwards to its goal is not a destiny that will induce us to make the most of ourselves. If it were true there would be nothing left for us to do but to eat and drink and sleep, like the beasts, until we died. If the forces that fight within us and so often make our lives a misery are grinding out a purpose beyond our control, and cease only when the machine wears out, there would be for many a grim pleasure in committing suicide and robbing them of their prey.

What is wrong with this view, as with all similar views, is that it gives a verdict meant to be final on facts that are incomplete. If science did this it would put itself in the same position as a Church which declares its doctrine to be infallible and eternal. But science, as we have seen, has no opinion on the subject. It knows that its range of knowledge does not extend so far. The further it pushes its way into the unknown, the wider and

deeper the unknown becomes. The more it studies what seems to be the simple cell, the more complex and baffling does its structure turn out to be. Only the man of science who forgets the limitations of our nature dogmatizes about the scheme of existence. He is like one who says there is nothing beyond the ocean because he cannot see past the horizon.

*creativity*  
Matter, life, and spirit are not one though they are related to each other. The earth is not the sun; the body is not the earth; the mind is not the body; and the spirit is not the mind. Because one developed out of the other, it does not follow that each is identical with what preceded it. They have all, as far as anything can have under the conditions of the universe, a separate and independent existence. Most of the things about us have come out of something else, but they are in themselves different from the objects out of which they have come. The paper of this book, for instance, has been produced from wood-pulp, but it is not, because of that, a tree. The window that is at present letting in the light is made of glass, and one has to think for a moment before recalling the fact that it is the product of sand, soda, and lime. We do not, however, say it is sand, soda, and lime, but glass.

When we die it is the basis of our life as lived

according to the conditions of earth that has given way. The body has fulfilled its purpose and dissolves and its constituents pass into other states. But that does not mean the end of the highest part of us, the seat of all that is latest in evolution. Evolution does not work continuously up to that point and then come to a precipice. It does what it has been doing since the beginning—it concentrates its energy on what is finest and best, and continues its activity under the new conditions which its product has reached. If we have lived in accordance with the scheme and intention of the Supreme Power and in line with the laws that govern us our spirit remains unimpaired to the last. The energy is then at its intensest, its vision at its clearest, its capacity best fitted for further development. It is the essence of existence, organised in a way we cannot yet grasp, ready to carry on, apart from the things with which it has been associated, a new and more cultured form of activity. Death, like birth, is an excess of growth. In its natural course it is not a fatality, an evil, but a necessity for the evolution of the spirit. There is no break in the continuity of the process, no state between. The spirit retains its identity and passes at once into the region where its fuller life begins. It cannot help persisting: it is the law of the universe.

Were it otherwise there would be no meaning in evolution. Any other conclusion at present is not only illogical and unscientific but unthinkable.

If, on the other hand, we do not rise to the responsibility of our position and the obligations it imposes upon us : if we do not obey the love-law of the Supreme Power as we ought to do and as we know how to do, the spirit may never reach the point of attainment enabling it to continue. It may not come into correspondence with the world of spirit. It may be neglected so much that it may become atrophied and die outright like an organ that is never used. There are men and women who are on the level of the beasts, because they cultivate only the attributes of the beasts. In such a case there may be no spirit left to persist and evolution for them on the higher plane may be an impossibility. Their fate may be the fate of the range of life below the human, but what that is we do not know.

The spirit which persists does not take with it the actual results acquired in the stages of its growth here. The body is the sum of the evolution of the race, embodying whatever development has done for it, but it does not transmit the achievements of the individual. It transmits only increased capacity. The mind does not hand down from generation to generation the store of

experience it has gathered by the way. If a child comes of perfect parents it will be perfect in quality of body and mind, but it will require training to be an athlete and knowledge to be wise. So with the spirit. It will leave everything behind it save only the organisation that has been evolved, and the capacity it has of greater attainment on higher lines.

It is not strange that we know little about the region of the spirit. We are still on the lower reaches of existence, walking among conditions that are rough and primitive, and guided by senses that, as we have seen, bring us into touch only with a small area of the universe. Our eye cannot see it, nor our ear hear its sound : neither can our reason and imagination picture what it is like. It is the spirit alone which can reveal it to us. As a peak shooting up into the rarefied air above the clouds is brought into correspondence with a realm which its spurs know nothing of, the spirit leads us into the heart of things, and the more it is cultivated the more we are able to know. This, of course, merely repeats what takes place in the lower areas of life. There are people deaf and dumb and blind who are aware of influences that do not impress others possessing all their senses but of coarser fibre. They can detect coming changes in the weather or the scents of

the earth, distinguish houses from one another by their odour, tell the winter rain from the spring rain. They know whether any one is sawing or planing or hammering by the vibrations of the floor. That is to say, they are in correspondence with a world which they neither see nor hear. It is a case of culture of the lower forms of 'touch,' just as perception of the spirit-land is a case of culture of the higher form, the 'touch' of the spirit.

What we learn from the spirit is that behind all the phenomena we see—behind the æther, and whatever there may be behind that, there is a region as real as the world we know. We call it the Unseen though the word does not express enough. There are influences and forces around us which we do not see but which we can prove to exist. We can control them. They are in the Unseen, but they are not in the area of spirit. That inner region is beyond or within even the Unseen. It may not be a locality, as we sometimes think it is: it may be, so to speak, the universe itself. What we see may be but the materialisation of it. We do not know. What we do know is that there is such a region, and that the way to it lies open to all who desire to reach it.

## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE DEPTHS

WHY, if all that has been said be true, have men and women not realised their position and possibilities : why have they in the mass never risen to the height of their responsibility ? This, indeed, is the real problem and mystery of life : not the reason and nature of things, but why we do not see the truth within the compass of our powers and act upon it. There has, no doubt, been progress. Ever since we became conscious of our relation to a Supreme Power the breach between the Seen and the Unseen has been filling up. But the process has been slower than it ought to have been. There has never been a time when we did not know what we were required to do. And we have never been left entirely to ourselves. The influence of God has never ceased to draw us upward. From time to time also men have been moved to think and speak aright for the guidance of the world. Especially was this so in the early days. These were normal but gifted men, subject to the conditions of their age. It is wonderful,

however, how true, in the main, their teaching was. Some succeeded in touching the imagination and life more than others, and there grew up gradually a series of systems of religion which moulded the destinies of millions.

Through this process there ran a central line of development. Some faiths ceased to grow, others turned off into crooked paths, but always one, the nearest to the heart of things, progressed and evolved. We find this highest manifestation at last represented in the faith of the Jews. They were a race poor in numbers and power, but while other nations, more intellectual and aggressive, were still occupied with phantasies which to us seem foolish and degrading, they had reached a fair conception of the meaning of existence. They knew the essential difference between good and evil, realised the character and exigency of the love-law, and saw far into the Unseen. In their literature of devotion and imagination, they show a sense of the relationship of humanity to the Supreme Power and all that it involves which is unsurpassed even in our own day. Their ten rules of life sum up the principles which still underlie the progress of civilisation.

But there came a time when all religious systems seemed to lose whatever efficacy they had. Their view was bounded by the Seen, they fell back



under the domination of the lower senses and their methods were formal, superstitious, and sensual. The effect was naturally most disastrous where culture of the mind accompanied atrophy of the spirit: in such cases people gave themselves up to the basest forces in their nature. The Jews did not in the mass sink into the slough of animalism. Their training and discipline saved them from that; it was, indeed, their physiological control which made them so virile and persistent a race. But they, too, missed their way as surely as the others did. Their offences lay chiefly in the higher aspects of existence and were all the worse for that. The majority were self-righteous fanatics and ritualists; many were sceptics and agnostics; they were spiritually dead. Here and there a few clung to the truth and longed for the advent of some saviour who would stem the course of lawlessness, purge the race of its evil, and turn the current of life into fresh and wholesome paths. Expression was often given to the feeling, but it was usually some political or military leader that was looked for, one who would fight and conquer and govern in the old way. Their deterioration marked a crisis in the development of the world greater than any that had yet occurred. It seemed as if evolution itself had slackened and the influence of the Unseen was powerless in a field

where opportunity for its activity had ceased. Humanity as a whole lay seething on the lower levels of existence. So debased did it become at last that the springs of life were poisoned, and corruption and disease spread everywhere, and everywhere brought suffering and weariness and decay.

The situation was similar to that which sometimes occurs in the life of an individual. When one runs counter to the laws of life and gives rein to his passions, he suffers, and the prospect is that he will make a wreck of his life. It needs the intervention of some higher influence, the compassion and solicitude and help of a father or friend to raise him up and help him; it needs higher resources still to strengthen his spirit sufficiently to enable him to overcome his weakness. So it is with humanity in the mass. It has its periods of lassitude and temptation, of self-indulgence, of moral declension and paganism, and it needs some power to step in and give it a fresh vision of its destiny, to revivify it, and so to raise it to a purer state, and save it.

We may venture in our human way to inquire how God would regard the condition into which the world had fallen. 'Looking down upon the children of men to find if there were any that understood and sought Him, He saw that all had

gone aside, all had become filthy, there was not one that did good, no, not one.' He would be sorry for the foolishness and pride and waywardness, and grieved for the misery that was suffered so needlessly. What, we may ask ourselves, was He likely to do under the circumstances? What should we have done if we can picture ourselves in such a position? Would we have grown tired of the doings of humanity and swept the insurgent earth into nothingness? That would have been to confess that the scheme of things had failed. Would we have planned to make matters easier for men and women by modifying the law which governed them? That, also, would have been to acknowledge a flaw in the design, while it would have lessened the value of the free-will which they possessed.

'No,' we should have said, 'the law cannot be annulled or put out of gear: the process of evolution must go on; the world must run its course. Until the earth pass not a jot or tittle of the law that governs it shall pass until all be fulfilled. What men and women need is not an alteration in the principles of life but a better knowledge of them and strength to obey them. Their ignorance and wilfulness and fear have led them astray. As their own teachers have taught them in vain, one shall now be sent from the Unseen endowed

with an authority they will be unable to question, who will reveal to them more clearly than has yet been done the love and law that governs everything, and who will be a light to them in their darkness and an influence for all time.'

This, at any rate, is what God did. His purpose cannot be better described than in the words imputed to Him by a wise man of the past. 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and the crooked things straight.' His love and His law were as perfect and sure as ever: it was men who could not realise it. But He had faith in their capacity and in the possibilities of their nature. He would not alter the constitution of the universe for them but He would, as it were, enlarge their vision so that they might see and know Him better and understand how to fulfil their responsibility to His law. He would send from the sphere of the spirit one with power sufficient to convince them that He came thence, yet of necessity one with all the qualities of humanity, who, if they listened to Him and obeyed Him, would save them from their sins. This was Jesus.

PART II

THE INTERPRETER OF LIFE



## CHAPTER I

*Advent (First)*

### THE MANNER OF HIS COMING

WE have to consider whether Jesus fits in with the scheme of things that has been outlined, and whether His teaching is in harmony with the purpose and law underlying it. We must remember the possibility that both in the method of His coming and in His message there may be that which we are not yet able to understand, which has not yet passed the test of science, and which only appeals to the higher view of the spirit. But if we find that what He was, and what He said, agree with what has been discovered since, and with that which continues to be discovered, we shall be justified in accepting Him as what He represented Himself to be.

What His position was in the spirit-world in relation to the Supreme Power we know from Himself. The language we have evolved is able only to describe the matters coming within the range of our powers and is not applicable in a case like this. But it is the only instrument which we can use in connection with Him, and the only one which

He Himself could use. If we were translated into a sphere where conditions prevailed different from those to which we were accustomed, we should adopt the language we found there to explain things of which the people had no conception, and for which, therefore, they had no words. In referring to His relation to God, Jesus adopted a term which implies a connection at once the closest and tenderest that can subsist between two beings. He called Him His Father. The Father, we are also told, called Him His Son. Their relation had existed before the earth was evolved. 'Thou lovedst Me,' said Jesus once, 'before the foundation of the world.' More than this we do not know, and it must be sufficient for us in the meantime.

Was the act of the Supreme Power in sending Him to the earth an interference with the plan on which the universe had been designed? We have seen how we restrict ourselves by the crudeness of our process of thought, how mechanical and primitive are our ideas of what is right on the part of the Father. There is as much peril in reason without imagination as there is in imagination without reason. Even if it were a question of interference, why should we not grant Him the right? If He had no power to interfere He would not be omnipotent. He would Himself be subject



to the law of our universe, which we cannot admit. The universe is ruled by law, but God is above its law, and the reason why He does not interfere is because the law is perfect for its purpose.

It is, however, not a question of interference but of explanation. God made no law that He would not explain the law if it were necessary to do so. All that He did was to send One to explain the lines on which the world is governed. A government on earth does not interfere with the laws it makes, when it appoints some one to expound them. A father does not interfere with the laws of the home when he sends a message to the schoolroom and intimates to the children, grown thoughtless and wayward, what his orders are, and how he expects them to be carried out. To explain things is not to interfere with them. For instance, light was always in the world, but we never knew much about it until the spectroscope was invented. This widened our vision. We then learned more about light and about the constitution of the sun and the stars whence it comes. It enabled us to see, as it were, into the Unseen. There was no interference with the law of light because the instrument was in line with the law of nature. In a higher sense Jesus was like the spectroscope. God did not violate any principle He had established when He sent Him

to illumine our path up the ascent of evolution. His law is interfered with only when it is broken, and it is not the one who makes the law but the one for whom it is made that is likely to be the offender.

*mission*  
But what about the manner of Jesus' advent into the world—was it not supernormal? In the first place, it is significant that He was not sent direct from the spirit-world. He did not appear suddenly, startling humanity with the splendour of a power hitherto unknown, and forcing it to believe in the reality of His mission. Had He done so He would have been different from men and women, and it would have been urged against Him that He could not possibly understand, from the level of their experience, the nature of their temptations and perils and sorrows. In the second place, Jesus could not come in accordance with the ordinary process as a link in the chain of life, for He was not part of it but One who was in the realm of spirit. Had He done so He would not have had the same claim upon us: He would have had no greater claim than the teachers who had appeared previously and founded systems of belief.

It was inevitable that the spirit of Jesus should be of the Unseen, while the body in which it was housed should be of the earth. As He Himself

said, He had to be under the law and subject to all the conditions that operated on the plane of the world. His advent into this sphere, therefore, had to be in agreement with the law ruling it. How it was effected we do not know. It took place in a region of vital phenomena which is still a mystery to us. Science cannot tell how life is passed on. It is working patiently at the problem and we have some dim knowledge of the mechanism of the process, but we cannot conceive of the conditions governing and limiting it and we cannot consequently say what is possible and what is impossible in connection with it. No doubt the birth of Jesus was something new in history—the very language in which it is recorded indicates that it was—but that did not make it in opposition to the law of the universe. It was not in accordance with any law within the range of our knowledge, but the universe is not governed only by the laws we have discovered on our lower plane. We have always to bear in mind that the area around us of which we are conscious is not the highest area of activity, and that there are other laws of which at present we have no conception. What is supernormal to us may be normal to beings of a higher order of evolution.

We have, however, some faint idea how potent spirit-power is, and when we consider how forces

on the lowest planes can do things that seem marvellous to us, we cannot refuse to grant greater powers to the highest. Those who reported the birth of Jesus knew no more than we do and they simply say that the influence of the Unseen 'overshadowed' the nature of Mary. His spirit and personality in some way passed into the substance that evolves and gave rise to the normal process and normal result. That we cannot even guess at the mechanism of it does not dispose of the fact that it happened. We have to account for something which history says took place, and it is in accordance with common sense to believe that it did, though we do not at present know how it was accomplished. Otherwise there are many things that have no meaning.

In the accounts of His life incidents that illustrate the two sides of His nature are mentioned casually and without intention on the part of the writers. We are told, for instance, that He was wearied with travelling, and yet He asked people to come unto Him and He would give them rest. He was often hungry, but He claimed to be the 'bread of life,' and He thirsted, but He also said, 'If any man thirst let him come unto Me.' Again it is stated that He wept, yet 'Let not your heart be troubled' were the words with which He comforted others. This was because He was a spirit

from the Unseen, and yet subject in the body to the conditions obtaining on the plane of earth. He was, in short, what He ought to have been ; what He could not but be.

It is not possible for us to realise what it meant for Jesus to do as He did. Some may say that it was no more than what many men would willingly have undergone. It is true that His experience was, in itself, nothing exceptional. But He was more than man. He came from a state of perfection into a lower state, retaining in His nature the sensibility of the higher, for the purpose of enlightening and helping a race of beings in the thrall of lawlessness and shame. What we should have to do to emulate Him would be to go back at the height of our culture to a stage in the abyss of evolution when pre-human conditions prevailed with the object of bettering the lot of the types existing there. The most courageous among us would flinch at the prospect. The analogy is not complete but it is sufficient to indicate the task Jesus undertook for the love of God and the sake of men and women, and it gives a clue to the mystery and wonder of His life, to His healing power and meekness and patience, to the loneliness and sorrow He endured, to the agony and tragedy of His death.

Why did He appear in the part of the world in

*Cost*

which He did? One's birthplace, of course, does not signify anything. There are those now growing up in villages remote from the centres of civilisation who may one day move the world. But the reason Jesus was born in Palestine was that the country was occupied by the people who were most advanced in the culture of the spirit. They had fallen back into a condition of lawlessness, but they had come nearest to truth and the Unseen, and it was natural and inevitable that a spiritual reformer should make His appearance in their midst. It would not have been in agreement with the scheme of things had He come to any other part of the world less prepared and fitted to receive the good tidings that He brought.

## CHAPTER II

### HIS METHOD

*Christ (Mission)*

IT is important that we should have a clear idea of what Jesus came to do. Our knowledge of Him and His message is gained from documents written by men who had been in touch with Him or with the persons and events of His time. They were not dreamers or fools: they knew more about the matters they recorded than we can possibly do, and there seems no reason why we should not accept their testimony as in the main correct. It is, no doubt, fragmentary, disjointed, and sometimes confused. There was nothing written at first, and the memory and the lips are not the best agencies for transmitting facts unimpaired. It was not until long after Jesus died that the need for an authoritative account of His life became manifest. And it was not the aim of the authors to compile a reasoned history of His career or a complete collection of His utterances. There was no necessity for that. His influence was personal, and in their narratives, therefore, they gave only just ~~as~~ much in such a pointed

and vivid way as they thought would convey its spirit and power to others.

The relation to Him of those responsible for the original material must also be borne in mind. In the memoir of any one we are never told of the real forces behind his activity. The biographer may have been intimate with him and have thoroughly grasped his views, but his estimate must at the best be superficial. Much more was this the case in regard to Jesus. He was not understood in His own day and by the men whom He chose to be His followers. They lived on a plane below His height, and were blind and unresponsive to much of His teaching. We know that He was sometimes vexed with them : 'How is it that ye do not understand?' He exclaimed; 'is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, see ye not, having ears, hear ye not?' We know also that they often realised their lack of insight and confessed it among themselves, but were too ashamed to ask Him to explain what they could not understand at the moment. With them as with the people in general He had to graduate His instruction, giving them the truth only as they were able to receive it. When they jotted down or repeated His remarks, either at the time or afterwards from memory, they did so often without ■ thought of the deeper significance they held. Much of



what He said they must have let go on account of what seemed its obscurity or irrelaton to the needs of humanity. But neither these omissions, nor what we may call the sub-editorial defects of the story, interfere with the value of what we have got. The more we seek to follow His example the wider our vision is ; and the greater our insight the better able are we to penetrate the form into which the description of His mission has been cast and to discern the real meaning behind.

From the evidence we have we find that Jesus did not come to the world on His own account : He was simply a messenger commissioned by God to do a certain work. He was always impressing this upon the people, and nothing could be more implicit and emphatic than His statements on the subject. 'I came from God,' He said, 'neither came I Myself, but He sent Me.' 'I came down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him that sent Me.' What He taught was what He had 'heard from God.' 'The Father which sent Me gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak.' 'I do nothing of Myself ; My Father hath taught Me what I speak.' 'My doctrine is not Mine but His that sent Me.' It was no gospel of His own that He brought, because He had none of His own to bring. What He came about was, as He said in the first words

of which we have any record, the business of His Father. We often say, 'Back to Jesus,' and it is well, because He stands for the truth, but He Himself said, 'Back to God.' He never put Himself first and God second. He will always be the light of the world : He will more and more obtain the passionate devotion and service of men and women, but it is God, His Father and ours, who is the head of the universe and claims our supreme love and allegiance.

The object of Jesus was not to alter the fundamental order of things, to change the laws that had hitherto guided the evolution of life, or set up a new religion and a new goal for humanity. He had not come to condemn the world but to save it ; not to judge men and women, for they were their own judges, but to reveal to them, to an extent greater than had yet been done, the love of the Father and the sufficiency of His law for all their needs. Some knowledge of these had already been gained. Morality, the beauty of holiness, did not begin with Jesus : He did not claim that it did. Love-law had always been present in the world, and obedience to it had always been possible in accordance with the position we had attained. When people asked Him for a rule of life He referred them to the truth which had been taught before He came. ' Follow

that,' He said, 'and you will do all that is necessary.' He did not mean the ceremonialism of the priests but the law of grace and truth. A man once questioned Him as to how eternal life could be gained. 'What is written in the law?' Jesus asked. 'This,' was the reply, 'that thou shalt love God with all thy heart and soul and strength and thy neighbour as thyself.' 'Thou hast answered right,' said Jesus. 'Do this and thou shalt live.' It was not to people who knew the truth that He came, so much as to the multitude who did not. Those who are well do not need a physician: 'I came,' He said, 'not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.' The love-law had been ignored and despised, and His purpose was to make it better known, that it might be the better obeyed and that men and women might be happier; 'that'—in His own words—'they might have life and have it more abundantly.'

The manner in which He carried out His mission was in harmony with its spirit. He did not do what an ordinary man claiming the same authority would have done. He did not seek notoriety. It is thought nowadays that little can be achieved without advertisement. Publicity is considered to be the secret of success. This was not the attitude of Jesus: it could not be. His method

was that in force in the region whence He had come. He depended solely upon the power and persuasion of truth, simply laying bare the facts of existence, telling people that they would be happy if they acted on them and unhappy if they did not, and leaving the matter there. He spoke quietly, directly, as often to individuals as to crowds, for He knew that if He could influence a few He would eventually influence the world. To use His own illustration, the truth was like leaven that gradually spread, or a grain of mustard seed that grew in time into a tree. While He did not deprecate organisation, which, as we shall see, is a method of God, He pointed out that in a sense there is no need for the organisation of religion. He did not condemn the institutions that already existed. Their buildings symbolised the love-law : they stood for God—He called the Temple His Father's House. He, Himself, frequented and taught in them. But He also taught on the hill-side and by the wayside and from the sea. He did not give any one place special sanction, but used them as the best means at the time for His purpose of enlightening men and women. He had not come to confirm the power and policy of any religious body, but to reveal God and explain the laws of being, and introduce the note of the spiritual into every aspect of life. ' Believe

Me,' He said in words that still ring clear and strong, 'the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' We can meet in fellowship, and worship God, anywhere. Neither the number nor the place matters. 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name,' He said, 'there am I in the midst of them.'

He had naturally to adapt His language to the capacity of His audiences. Although the people He addressed were morally in advance of other races, they were still slow of brain and bound by convention and ritual, and He found it difficult to lift their thoughts above the interests of the Seen. They did not seem able to take in the significance of the simplest statement of truth. He had to speak to them as to children, using homely phrase and figure, and resorting constantly to story and illustration to arouse and fix their intelligence. Like all high spirits He saw in nature symbols of the larger and finer truths. 'Without a parable,' we are told, 'He spoke not unto them.' He did not mean these to be taken literally, nor were they so taken at the time. It was not until afterwards, when the charm and

power of His personality had faded, that theories were based upon them which led to the undoing of multitudes. On other occasions He would quote from their records of law and religion with which they were familiar in order to convey His meaning more certainly to them. It was natural that He should do so. These records marked high-water in the movement of thought and aspiration towards the spiritual and embodied many of the principles He had come to reiterate and enforce. He did what He would have done had He appeared at any other period—He selected from the literature of the past what served to illustrate His theme at the moment and imparted to it a richer and fuller meaning. Even the prayer to the Supreme Power that He gave them as a model was largely a mosaic of thoughts drawn from their own liturgy.

There is one aspect of His method that seems opposed to this idea of His work—that involving what are called His miracles. So much are we the slaves of the words we use that we always think of a miracle as something overruling law. We have seen, however, that what we know of law is not the whole of it but only that part which operates within the area of our knowledge. When a miracle happens it is something that has taken place in line with law outside the limits of our

experience. It is merely that which we cannot at present explain. The world is a miracle, man is a miracle. That we go on living is in itself miraculous; so is the fact that of the millions of people upon the earth no two are absolutely alike. Some of the things most familiar to us are miracles—the telephone, for instance, is a miracle not only to those who use it, but to those who make it.

In virtue of His position Jesus knew more of the laws of the universe than we can realise. He was highly organised, possessed a sensibility that we have not yet reached, and was aware of forces which are only now beginning to come within the range of our thought, and knew how to utilise and control them. His spirit was so fine, so powerful, that He could even read the thoughts of people. It was like the X-rays which reveal what is hidden behind substances impervious to common light. Moreover, His life was perfect towards the love-law, and He was therefore immune from evil and able in a special degree to influence men and women. He had what His biographers call 'virtue' in Him. Like a man of science in our day He was able to do things which seemed marvellous to others who had not the same skill. When, for instance, He performed His miracles of healing, He was doing nothing more than a physician

does who uses remedies unknown to his patients. The knowledge and practice of medical men nowadays would have appeared magical to people two centuries ago, and they would have deemed many things we see done as miraculous as the miracles of Jesus appear to us. We have not yet advanced far in our acquaintance with the law of the universe, but we are becoming more conscious of what we do not know, and realising that there exists a region that has hitherto been shut off from our sight. It is being investigated. We are probing into it patiently and laboriously, and now and then we are catching glimpses of the principles behind its phenomena. It is the region with which Jesus was familiar and on whose stores of power He drew whenever He saw the need. In time we shall find that all the miracles He did were in harmony with the higher conditions of existence.

The point to note is that they had no special significance, but were an ordinary part of His mission of rescue and healing. He had come to save people from lawlessness and its effects, and in His love and sympathy He was 'moved with compassion' towards those who suffered. They were never performed to aid Himself or to dazzle the crowd. When they were accomplished He did not blazon them abroad. He told those who



were restored to keep what He had done a secret. 'Let no man know it' was often on His lips. When He gave hearing to a deaf man and sight to one who was blind, He took them aside from the people and enjoined them not to tell any one else. When He raised a little girl to life again He charged the onlookers to keep silent about it. He never used miracles as a weapon to force the sceptical into belief. On the contrary, He always resented being called upon to exhibit His gifts as a justification for His claims. To all who asked for a sign He said resolutely that no such proof would be given to them. It was not His province to capture humanity by violence. It was not by such evidence that they were to be brought to the truth. The mere display of what to them was supernatural would never help them to live aright. It was obedience to the love-law that would do that, and what it did was in itself a miracle. If they did not believe the evidence it afforded them, they would not be persuaded even if one rose from the dead. At the same time no one who had the spirit-sense cultivated to any extent could doubt what these things meant. When, therefore, a request came to Him to say whether He was the one that was looked for, He told the messengers simply to recount what was happening, how the blind were receiving their

sight, the deaf their hearing, the lame their power of walking, and how even the dead were being brought back to life. That was enough to convince any one that a force higher than what they were accustomed to was at work.

(knowledge)  
(reticence)  
With the knowledge that Jesus possessed He could have laid bare to men and women the mysteries of the universe. But that would have infringed on their own right to find out things for themselves, and He did not tell them what it was not necessary for them to know. Of what use would it have been to have astonished them with a vision of matters which they could not have understood and which could not have had any effect on their lives? Suppose, for instance, that He had described the forces lying latent in nature and how they could have been applied to the service of the world as we see them applied now. They would not only have laughed Him to scorn, they would have deemed Him mad. And if they could not have believed had He told them things pertaining to the plane of the earth, how would they have believed if He had told them facts about the Unseen? He did not attempt it. On all points where a revelation of truth would have been inconsistent with the world-scheme of His Father He maintained reserve. An ordinary teacher, ambitious to make a reputation, would

have endeavoured to answer all their questions, would have given them some theory of the earth, offered an explanation of the mechanism of living, and swept back with a light hand the veil that covers the unknown. It was because Jesus knew all that He told less than He knew.

What He did was to reveal the love of the Father and the law that had been in the world since the beginning, both of which we ought to have known more about. We should expect, therefore, that what He taught would be in line with development until the end, since the law never alters. And, as far as we can judge, we find that it was. We know now that the real meaning of much of what He said was wrapped up in metaphor and symbol. 'I speak to you in proverbs,' He told His followers. They might not, He said, understand what He meant then, but He asked them to let His words sink into their minds and things would become clearer to them by and by. As they went on developing they would obtain more insight. The spirit of truth, the influence of the Father, would teach them. This turned out to be the case. As light shines out of darkness, so the significance of His speech, noted as inexplicable at the time, was later realised. The process of enlightenment has gone on ever since. Each age discovers a new and deeper meaning in His utterances. They

imprinted themselves on the dark mind of humanity as a picture is impressed on the negative in a camera, and are being 'developed' as spiritual experience is applied. The finer and higher our culture becomes the better we comprehend Him and all He stood for. To one walking in the love-law His teaching is a continuous revelation.

It is a tribute to the truth of His message that nothing that has come to light since He lived has proved inconsistent with it. Nothing that He said has been disproved by science, and nothing has had to be withdrawn. Think what this means. Here is one who lived nineteen hundred years ago, and yet He had a knowledge of the love-law which goes beyond our own. So lofty was His teaching that we have not yet reached the height of its meaning. So perfect was His life that we have to confess that we cannot imitate it. Surely there could be no stronger proof that He was what He said He was.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT HE TAUGHT

WHEN we examine the teaching of Jesus we find that it deals with the two main aspects of life—our relation to the Supreme Power, and our relation to one another. Our first duty, He said, is to love God with all our might, and the next to love our neighbour as ourself. To do this is to carry out the purpose of our existence; it is to live the perfect life.

First of all He described our position and responsibility in regard to God and His law. He knew how we had ascended by development from lower conditions and sometimes He hinted at the process. It was a picture of evolution on what we call the physical plane that He gave when He spoke of the earth bringing forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; and He indicated what goes on in the higher plane when He said that if He had not come there would have been people who would not have known evil and that there was no excuse for those who knew the truth. He naturally never

spoke of that specific 'fall' of humanity to which reference has already been made. There is, at any rate, no report of any allusion to it in the records of His life. The narrative which embodies the story is now accepted as a pictorial representation of the phenomena accompanying our spiritual rise, and, taken in this sense, is fundamentally in agreement with the latest view to which the development of knowledge has brought us.

It was not necessary for Him to reveal anything of the world-process because He had not come to instruct people in what law had brought about but in the law itself. What He taught was the truth which we have already seen to lie at the root of existence ; that God stands in the position of a Father towards us and that we are His children. He revealed His love for us, threw a warmer, more tender light on His personality, brought Him, as it were, more within our reach. He showed that He was the source of that Unseen love-light in which alone the spirit can grow, just as the sun is the source of the light we see on the earth in which alone the body can live. The love-light is as natural as the sunlight and acts with the same certainty. The one is always as available to us as the other. Whether we take advantage of them or not both are there. If we

keep within the influence of the love-light our higher nature will go on developing the qualities that belong to it. These are like the æther waves that make up sunlight. If all the waves enter the eye at once they produce the sensation we call white, while colour is caused by waves of different lengths being absorbed or reflected by things around us.

So, if we analyse the love-light we find it to consist of a combination of qualities belonging to the Power from whom it issues. They are what many may consider of no importance, just simple and ordinary virtues and graces that are frequently neglected and often despised—meekness, purity, patience, charity, unselfishness, humility, tenderness, sweetness, quietness, courage. Jesus tells us that if we live within the radiance of the spirit-light we shall assimilate these into our lives. We cannot tell how it is done any more than we can explain the mechanism of ordinary light. All we know is that the result follows, unconsciously and inevitably, as it does in the case of the colours which make the world so beautiful. We may not take in all the elements of the spirit-light, but only one or two or more, and may do well, though not so well as it is possible for us to do. Jesus said, ‘Be ye perfect even as your Father is perfect,’ and we are astonished at the command, but He

knew us better than we know ourselves. He meant that if we live constantly and entirely in the love-light we shall absorb all the qualities it contains and so shine with the white light of perfection. We have the capacity for it: at every stage of development we can be perfect as far as our position takes us, even as Jesus was perfect in His higher position, and even as the Father is perfect with absolute perfection, because He is the absolute and ultimate One.

On the other hand if we shut out the love-light and keep our spirits in darkness they droop and die as surely as our bodies do when removed out of the sunlight. Jesus illustrated the position in an allegory that has never lost its beauty and point. He describes a son, who, becoming dissatisfied and restless, leaves his home and wanders into a far country. There he lives basely and sinks almost to the level of the beasts. His father grieves for him but his love remains unchanged. If his son elects to remain away and die beyond his influence he cannot but let it be so. But the prodigal is so broken and saddened by his experience that he makes up his mind to return, and he arises and goes to his father, and his father welcomes and loves and cares for him as if nothing had happened. So it is with God and us. We may in our waywardness cut off our relation with Him



and may never again come within the range of His influence, but He does not cut off His relation with us. The light of His love always shines for us whenever we turn our faces homewards.

This return to God and His law is a return to health of spirit and mind and to happiness and peace. Jesus spoke of the process as the forgiveness of 'sins'—sin denoting the result of breaking the love-law. The word, however, was misconstrued then as it is now. People gave it a very narrow implication, whereas He meant any and every contravention of the law whether on the plane of the physical or that of the spiritual—all involving what we call moral guilt. He talked of men 'sinning' against others or doing them injury. When He healed those who suffered in body it was their 'sins,' He said, that were forgiven. He told the man who was sick of the palsy to be of good cheer because his sins were forgiven him. The spectators were amazed; they thought of sin in the conventional sense, and Jesus, knowing this, asked them what the mere words amounted to? What did it matter whether He said, 'Thy sins be forgiven,' or 'Arise and walk'? The effect was the same. And He showed it by curing the man. Again, when He saw a victim of disease lying at a pool, He asked him if he would be made, 'whole' making

no reference to 'sin.' But afterwards in the Temple He told him to 'sin'—to disobey the law—no more, lest worse results should follow. In all these cases He stood for the love-law, the power that forgave and healed. Naturally, therefore, it was only by coming to Him, to what He represented, that the consequences of sin could be wiped out. The act of doing so brought the offender within the influences of the forces of healing, and these, sooner or later, according to the trust and obedience shown, re-established the natural poise that had been disturbed.

Sometimes, according to the manner of the time, Jesus personified evil as the adversary of good, giving it the name of Satan. After He had been in the desert where He was subjected to the subtlest influences of evil and was tempted to disobey the love-law, He described the experience to those who afterwards recorded it in the picturesque language to which they were accustomed. He had been tempted by 'Satan.' He had in a double sense been with the 'wild beasts.' More than once when using the expression it is expressly stated that He was 'speaking in parable,' one of the occasions being when He was subjected to the evil influence of a disciple. He also said of a woman who had been

infirm for eighteen years that she had been bound to Satan.

The second aspect of Jesus' teaching deals with the mutual relations of men and women. Our responsibility towards each other follows inevitably on our responsibility to God. If we love <sup>God</sup> the Father we shall love all others upon the earth. We cannot help it any more than the objects around us can help reflecting the colours they receive. It is doubtful whether we take in the full meaning of this truth. We are so used to being told that we ought to love one another that we dismiss the injunction as a platitude. When driven to it we may acknowledge that we should do so, but we excuse ourselves by saying that it is impossible in life as we have to live it. There are many, even now, as in Jesus' day, who take credit for hating others. But Jesus made it clear that the practice of love is an essential element of the scheme of things and the basis of all social order and happiness. He was, Himself, the embodiment of it, and His commandment was that we should love one another as He had loved us. We know how He loved us and how He showed it. He was the essence of brotherliness in manner and speech, courteous, gentle, long-suffering, forgiving. This is the attitude we have to adopt in our association with each other if we wish to remain in the

Kingdom of God. The only way of escape from the necessity is that which leads into the region of lawlessness.

Love for one another, however, is more than an attitude. It includes service. Jesus was constantly seeking to emphasise this truth. He pointed to Himself, as He had the right to do, for He was the incarnation of love. 'I am amongst you,' He said, 'as one that serveth.' 'I came not to be ministered unto but to minister.' We know what His life was—a ministry on behalf of others. He went about continually doing good. There could be nothing clearer than His teaching on the point. He condemned the pride of power and authority. 'Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister: whosoever will be chief let him be as a servant.' On one occasion He acted a parable in order that He might the better impress His disciples. He knelt down and washed their feet. 'Do you understand what I have done?' He said. 'If I your Master have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.'

It is not surprising that He made a sense of social responsibility, the thought and care for those in need, the test of our relation to the Father. 'By the love you show for one another,' He said,

'it will be known whether you are followers of Me or not.' It stands to reason that if we love God we shall love others, and that if we do not love others we cannot love God. We may think that what we do is too trivial and commonplace to count one way or the other, but the law covers the whole range of our circumstances. We may ignore our obligations, may never see any opportunity of ministering to others; it may, indeed, never strike us that there is anything required from us beyond living our own lives and attending to our own interests. But that does not alter the law or the result of passing it by. The result of passing it by is seen in the social conditions of the world to-day—the slums, the poverty, the sordidness, the embittered relations and unrest that make life so wretched and meagre for millions.

Jesus illustrated the issue in His own wonderful way. He pictured the world put under the test, with Himself, representing the love and the law, as judge. Those who had been faithful to what was required of them gained the reward of obedience. 'For,' said He, 'when I was hungry they gave Me meat, when I was thirsty they gave Me drink, when I was a stranger they took Me in, naked and they clothed Me, sick and they visited Me, in prison and they came unto Me.' And when they, tender, compassionate, humble souls,

expressed surprise because they had never been conscious of doing any of these things to Him, He replied, 'Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of My brethren you did it unto Me.' On the other hand, those who had failed to fulfil the law He described as being condemned as unworthy to live. 'For I was an hungered and you gave Me no meat, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink. I was a stranger and you took Me not in, naked and you clothed Me not, sick and in prison and you visited Me not.' And when they protested, saying, 'When saw we you hungered or athirst or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister unto you?' there came, like a sword-flash, the answer, 'Inasmuch as you did it not unto one of the least of these My brethren you did it not to Me.'

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW WE ARE HELPED

Help

IF we fulfil our responsibility on the lines which Jesus explained, we enjoy a felicity of being that nothing can lessen or destroy. It is not a reward or a privilege but the simple result of living within the area of right. But the very nature of our development, the fact that we are imperfect with a heritage of evil tendencies, weaknesses, and defects from the past makes it difficult for us to act up to such an ideal of living. A scheme of existence which contained this and nothing more would be to many a round of striving and stumbling and disappointment. There is more; provision is made for helping, sustaining, and comforting us; and there are infinite resources upon which we can draw.

The relation of God to us and our relation to Him is not passive. Jesus, who was God in being, always indicated this when He said, 'Come unto Me.' The position may be best made clear by our old illustration of the home. Children come to their parents with their troubles and receive sympathy and advice and help. There is no

mystery in the relation unless the children create it: they bring their needs, foolish and legitimate, in the knowledge that they will be wisely dealt with. So it is in the larger home of the spirit.

We have the right to come to God, as a child to his father, simply and naturally, in love and reverence. The character of our intercourse may reflect our ignorance, but that does not matter. A child that waited until it had sense before it approached its father would wait a long time and would run the risk meanwhile of wrecking its life.

This intercourse is what, in the language of religion, is called prayer. The word, however, does not convey the whole meaning of the experience. Prayer in the ordinary sense is petition. This was the original implication. Men prayed because they feared their gods and their requests were usually for material benefits. The same pagan idea is still dominant in Christendom and is largely the cause of the intellectual revolt against the practice. Our system of prayer, it is said, makes God a kind of careless despot who has to be perpetually reminded of our needs. If, it is argued, He is omniscient and rules wisely He must know what is best for us and there is no use praying at all. If He does hear and answer, it means that He must be always interfering with His laws to suit our individual case.



Prayer in the real sense is the perpetual effort of the spirit to get into touch with the Father, to understand Him and His love and law, and to utilise the forces of His Kingdom. It is a question of spirit coming into the presence of spirit, and is therefore something outside the range of our ordinary senses. We cannot know much of the conditions that govern it: it is mainly a matter of experience. But we know enough to be sure that it involves no lessening of our responsibility or any interference of God with His fixed laws. It is curious how jealous we are of the presence and power of God in His own universe, and how we insist on placing ourselves outside the range of His personal activity. It is as if we banished a father from a home, or a king from his dominions, and were content with the laws that had been made for running them. A house and a kingdom are governed by law, but there is also in them the service of love within the limits of the law.

Jesus never said that the laws of the universe could be altered for our sake—that would be to bring about chaos. When through our own wilfulness disaster comes into our life it is, in a sense, too late to begin to pray; we should have sought to avert it by right thinking and right action. When calamities happen, an epidemic, a famine, a war, we pray that they may be assuaged and

cease. What we should do, rather, is to seek for the causes and remove them. We should not shift our responsibility upon God. Such events are not calls to prayer but calls to better living. So in other cases. We may, of course, suffer through the misdoing of others and it is here that prayer and its resources help us. For although laws work out to the end we have to remember that even within the boundaries of our existence there is room for the play of the power of the Unseen to an extent that we have not yet begun to realise. The love of God and His influence are far greater than His laws.

We have already described the process of prayer. Jesus told us what are the conditions that govern its practice. Mere words are useless. Speech in itself does not carry far. It may reach the ears of people about us but it goes no further. This is often the only purpose of those who pray and they have their reward. It is what lies behind the words, the thought, the impulse, the feeling, that reaches God. The mute and momentary turning of the spirit to Him wherever we happen to be, even in the press of the street, is prayer in the real sense. Nor are prayers efficacious because of their length. These are a feature of modern religion but they are a contravention of the teaching of Jesus. He condemned them. 'Many,' He

said, with a touch of irony, 'think they will be heard for their much speaking.' The freedom of the spirit cannot be restricted, but the nearer it comes to God and lives in His presence the more intensive becomes the communion, the less desire is there for long and formal exhortations to Him. In the nature of it, prayer is an intimate, personal, private thing. Jesus taught us that we should pray in secret, and it is when we are alone and quiet, and free from things that distract, that we as individuals can best come to God. Jesus Himself set the example. It was in lonely places, on the mountain-side, or in the wilderness, late at night, or before the dawn, that He sought the presence of His Father and communed with Him.

Many who pray regularly appear to derive no benefit from the act. Others in some crisis of their lives will turn imploringly to the Unseen and yet get no relief or comfort. It is a bitter moment for all of us when, after trying to fight some base impulse and beseeching protection against it, we give way after all. In such cases, however, there is always a flaw in our attitude. It may be that we forget we are addressing One who is actual and who is ready to listen to us. If we come casually to Him, even, as is sometimes the case, ignoring the reality of His presence, we shall not be heard. If we send our thoughts and aspira-

tions into the void it is not surprising that they awake no reply.]

Or it may lie in the lack of a simple trust that what we ask will be granted. The giving is conditioned by our capacity to receive. What is the use of approaching God feeling, as so many do, that it is but a chance whether we shall obtain any response? Jesus told us that without absolute faith nothing could or would be done. This was often shown in the course of His own career. He stood for the Father and His love and law, but He could never do anything with those who did not believe on Him. It was only such as drew on His power in utter sincerity of belief who were healed. Others stood by and saw the wonders accomplished, but they did not realise the truth which lay behind. He marvelled at their blindness, and the problem was how He could arrest their attention and make them understand. We know how He tried to do it. He used words and phrases that seemed to imply impossibilities and yet represented the essential truth. 'You have not,' He said, 'because you ask not.' 'All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.' 'If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you.' What these and other statements mean is obvious. In the language of to-day

they signify that if we obey the love-law and have faith all the resources of the Unseen are at our command. This is not so remarkable as it may seem. The sun is the source of the energy in the world, and we know something of what it does but not all: we probably know only a fraction of what it is capable of doing. So we know something of what the influence of God can do, but not the whole, because we seldom put ourselves in a position to test its capacity.

We must not imagine that we shall get all we like to ask for. Many people, because they do not automatically receive replies to all their petitions, disparage prayer and doubt its efficacy. But God will not respond to requests that are not in line with His purpose and law. To do so would be for Him to commit evil—which is impossible. Jesus never asked anything not in harmony with the scheme of things. He said He could have prayed and secured help from the Unseen to resist His arrest, but that would not have been in accordance with the law. In His capacity as the representative of God He refused appeals as well as granted them. Once when two of his followers, presuming on His utterances, asked Him for positions of power hereafter He gently rebuked them. ~~The truth is, to speak humanly, that God knows more and sees further than we do, and He can be~~ *also*

trusted to watch our interests. It will always be found that His 'No' is as much an answer as His 'Yes.' Every one who is trying to walk in the perfect way is conscious of this. We often beg with vows and tears for something we desire and do not obtain it, and afterwards we shrink with shame from the mere thought of it, and are thankful that our request was refused. That is the answer—a better understanding of God's will.]

[ Even if our requests be not granted as we want them to be we are not left without help. A child may turn away disappointed, but his father deals all the more tenderly with him, and influences him all the same. | God may not avert a trial or remove a burden or cure an illness, but He will ease it for us and give us the power to bear it. Jesus Himself had an experience which we can never think of without pain. Towards the end, when His spirit was tortured by the vision of what was coming, He prayed that the cup of agony might pass. He knew, He said, that all things were possible to His Father but, He added, 'Not My will but Thine be done.' The cup did not pass, but from the moment He spoke He obtained all the strength He needed, and as He drank the bitterness of suffering to the dregs the power of the Unseen flowed into His nature, and bore Him up and carried Him through into the peace beyond. ]

It is to be noted that when He said, 'Not My will but Thine be done,' He did not 'resign' Himself to the situation in the sense that modern people use the word. Resignation is not the attitude of disciples. It implies that we submit to our lot reluctantly, with grief, with a sense of sacrifice. We should rather accept any decision of God with gladness and a belief that we are in the right way hard though it may seem to be. The words of Jesus were a recognition that God knew best and that His way was best, and so He faced the dread experience with perfect calm and assurance.

What He sought to impress upon the world was that all things that are good for us to have, all in harmony with the purpose of God, we shall obtain. 'If you,' He said, 'being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him.' The best plan is to bring our requests and then to leave them in the assurance that what is good for us we shall get, and what we do not get we are better without. We do not know all that we need, and the benefit of our relation to the Father is that He gives us what is necessary independently of our asking, just as a father on earth anticipates the requirements of his children. 'Our Father,' said Jesus,

‘ knows what things we have need of before we ask Him.’ It would be strange if it were otherwise : it would be contrary to His character and plan as we know them. But there is no room to doubt it as all who love Him and approach Him in the right spirit are aware. The swift answers that come to their prayers, the help and strength they receive, the care taken of them even in the smallest affairs of life, are things to wonder at, to be grateful for, to be humble about.

In virtue of the bond that unites us all we have the right to pray for each other. If we love others we will help them in this way just as we seek to help them in what we call a ‘ practical ’ way. It is, indeed, only a higher phase of the same service. Jesus taught that we should pray even for people who offend and injure us. He Himself prayed for all, the good and the bad, those who loved Him and those who murdered Him, and we have to follow His example. The conditions governing this kind of prayer are the same as those governing that for ourselves, and the same results follow. An ordinary father likes to see his child sympathising and caring for those in need, and he gladly gives his help when called upon. God will not do less for us. The potency of this Unseen service is not perhaps fully realised. It was demonstrated



as it has never been done before by the disciples of Jesus who followed immediately in His footsteps. They possessed a strange magnetism of power and were able to do things that appeared marvellous in the eyes of the multitude. But as time passed and faith waned, the manifestation of it became less common. It is still uncommon, though the source of it remains unchanged and inexhaustible and free to all.

There is no doubt that as our spirits develop and we come into closer relation with God, prayer, as we know it at present, will become less of a factor in our relation to Him. When a child grows up he understands his parents better, is more in sympathy with them, and becomes one with them in thought and outlook. By and by we shall be more in harmony with God's will and purpose, and our prayers will naturally lose their character of appeal and petition; we shall cease to be suppliants for what we think is for our good. Our attitude will be more that of communion, of adoration, of contemplation, of silence. We shall speak less and listen more; we shall not be so self-conscious and will seek only to absorb the power and influence of the Unseen. We shall need no stated times for devotion, for our life will be one long prayer.

## CHAPTER V

### WEAVING OUR DESTINY

IT was the simplicity of the truth which Jesus taught that stood in the way of its acceptance. People then looked upon their relation to the Unseen much as they do now. We regard it as something mysterious and complex, and ruled by laws beyond our comprehension. Any explanation of it, we fancy, must, from its very nature, be hard to grasp. Like astronomy it has a side that is popular, but, like astronomy also, it is so abstruse that institutions are established for the purpose of teaching its principles. On the whole we rather like to think that it is so. We are always attracted by what is vague and marvellous. But as in reality there is nothing more simple than the order and movement of the stars, so there is nothing more simple and intelligible than the facts of religion. The difficulty from the beginning has been for men and women to believe that these involve all that is necessary for them to make the most of their lives. They are so familiar, so commonplace, that they pass

them by and strain their eyes to discern something, they hardly know what, in the distance.

It was, therefore, the main business of Jesus to make people see and understand. 'Come and see,' are the earliest recorded words of His public ministry, and we find the appeal recurring throughout His career to the end. To see what? Himself. Why? Because He was an incarnation of the Unseen and the love-law. He was a light from the region beyond, illumining the area in which men and women groped. 'I am the light of the world,' He said in the language of a science higher than we know. 'He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness. I have come that they which see not may see.' And again, 'I am the way and the truth and the life; none cometh to the Father but by Me.' It was clear what He meant. To go to Him, to learn of Him, was to go to the fountain head, to discover the laws of life and the perfect way, to know the Father. 'He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me.' 'He that knoweth Me knoweth the Father.'

Merely to see is something, but not all. We often say that seeing is believing, but belief does not always follow on sight. Hundreds saw Jesus and listened to Him but did not believe on Him. 'You also have seen Me,' He said to the people who thronged about Him, 'and believe not,' He made

allowance for their position, their heritage of ignorance, and the cares that blinded them to the Unseen. If, He said, they believed in Him whom they saw before them it was the same as believing in God. If they obeyed Him they would necessarily be obeying all He stood for. 'He that believeth in Me believeth on Him that sent Me.' 'Whosoever shall receive Me receiveth not Me but Him that sent Me.' And, on the other hand, 'He that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.' With Him, therefore, before them, they had no excuse for withholding allegiance to God, and neither have we now with Him as a figure still before us.

What happens when the scheme of life as He thus interpreted it is accepted or rejected? He could only explain the law as it had been from the beginning. We have seen how we are subject to a process of evolution which imposes upon us the necessity of always getting nearer the ultimate standard of perfection. Every good thought and deed helps us to that end: every evil thought and deed hinders us. This is not fancy; it is a fact of physiology. What we think and do leaves its mark on our organisation; if it be in line with the law it adds to our health and happiness; if it be evil it scars and wastes the tissue of life and destroys our vitality and peace. In this way we

weave our destiny. Jesus showed that there was no special reward or punishment meted out to us. The reward for keeping the law of our being is the state of felicity we enjoy and the continued development of our capacity for a fuller existence in the future. But this is not a reward in the sense we use the word : it is a natural result of our own action. Similarly there is no special punishment for lawlessness, the penalty is the loss we suffer by the arrest of our progress, the degradation of being in a state lower than that in which we ought to live. This is the hell into which we descend, sent not by any higher judge of our conduct, but by ourselves, and the system which God ordained.

In describing the position Jesus took extreme cases by way of illustration. If we obey the love-law, or, in other words, if we believe in Him, the embodiment of it, we are not judged ; there is no judgment necessary. 'He that believeth is not condemned.' We are already within His kingdom, and we are dead to evil and are safe. This is the intention underlying the scheme of things. Jesus could not make it plainer than He did. 'This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth Me and believeth may have everlasting life.' 'He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me has eternal life and he has passed

out of death to life.' It is a logical sequel. 'He that believeth on Me though he die yet shall he live, and whosoever believeth on Me shall never die.' And again, 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me though he were dead'—though his spirit were outside the Kingdom by reason of his lawlessness—'yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.' Because although the body dies the spirit persists. The process of evolution does not, as we have seen, stop at what we call death. It simply becomes more intensive and evolves in accordance with higher laws. God, as Jesus said, is not a God of the dead but of the living. When He brought back the daughter of Jairus to life we read that the 'spirit came again.' When He died His words were 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' But only those, He said, who are worthy will attain. The closer we draw to the Father the less death means to us, the less reason we have to fear it. It ceases to be a barrier between this life and the beyond and becomes, like the dawn, the shading of one condition insensibly into another.

On the other hand, if we do not fulfil the law of our nature—if we do not believe in Jesus as the representative of the Father and the law, we are, He said, already judged. We have judged

ourselves: we are self-condemned. 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' If we do not obey the law of our being, if we do not sacrifice our lower nature in the interests of the higher, we are below the point of development which persists in the sense in which Jesus meant. We are, in His words, like a branch that is withered, fit only for the fire. This is not only the teaching of Jesus; it is the conclusion of science. When the mechanism of life runs down there is no organisation high enough to persist on the spiritual plane. What exists goes into what Jesus, with perhaps greater accuracy than we realise, described as the 'outer darkness' of space. This is the 'everlasting punishment' to which He referred. The word means not chastisement but a cutting off. There is no place of torment to which our spirits are sent to undergo torture for disobedience and misdeeds. Such an idea was an outgrowth of the earlier attempts of man to explain and balance the phenomena of life, but like many others, it typifies what actually takes place. Jesus used it as He used others the better to impress audiences accustomed to material conceptions of the truth.

This idea of punishment in the future added to the effect of lawlessness here still enters into the outlook of men and women. It is thought that unless we have the fear of pain and penalties

before us we cannot be made to go in the way of righteousness. That is to say we can have no love of goodness for its own sake, but must be driven to do right by threats and reprisals. If this were the scheme of things, we should have to acknowledge that it had failed, for even the anticipation of unspeakable suffering in the future has no effect on the mass of men and women. It is, as Jesus indicated, love and not fear that influences us. Fear paralyses and hardens: love softens, redeems, and beautifies. It could not be otherwise, for it is love on which the universe is based.

What, one may ask, of those who live moral lives but do not acknowledge God? It is a question whether there are any such. Morality is founded on the love-law, and one who obeys its dictates acknowledges, if tacitly, the Power which established it, and stands nearer Him than he knows. It is difficult to deal with such cases, for we never get behind the surface and at the real conviction. Jesus, however, settled the matter for us by saying that he who was not against Him was for Him, and we can leave it there.

There are those, again, who, after more or less lawless lives, knock late at the door of the Unseen, and have their vision of the love-light at the end, and what of them? The answer lies in the fact



that Jesus did not come to reclaim the good but the evil, and all, therefore, who at any time come to Him in the right spirit, who see a vision of truth and wish to follow it, who, to use His own expression, are 'born again' will be healed and pass on. An incident in His career shows this clearly. When a woman who had sinned deeply came to Him in a passion of repentance and washed His feet with her tears she was forgiven. 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' He said. 'Go in peace.' She believed in Jesus and all He stood for and was from that moment 'saved.' So, too, in the case of the thief on the Cross. It cannot be otherwise, because if we fulfil the requirements of the law we must enter into the result. Whether the position of such spirits is equal to those that have been more highly developed we do not know. But even if the attainment be not the same we may be sure that there is the same opportunity for further progress.

There is the case of children who, generally through no fault of their own, die before they have had anything like a chance. From what Jesus said we know that all is well with them. He often bore witness to the sanctity of childhood. 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' He told people that unless they became as children

they could not enter into the higher sphere. The spirits of children are fresh and innocent of wilful evil, and they are bound to pass on to development under happier conditions. We have, moreover, the explicit word of Jesus that they do. 'I say unto you,' He declared, 'that their angels—or spirits—always behold the face of My Father in heaven.' He had to speak in the language of the day to be understood, but there is no doubt as to His meaning, and this assurance is more than enough for those who have hidden in their nature the memory of little ones that slipped early away.

There are many who believe, in a more or less vague way, that what they term lost souls exist somewhere in the inner region of the Unseen; but as evil, as we know it, ceases to be when the spirit is freed from the conditions that give rise to it on the earth, there can be no 'evil spirits' in the higher sphere.

On the actual position and responsibility of spirits that do persist Jesus threw little light. His aim was to explain the laws on our plane of existence and not those on the higher plane, and He was careful not to say more than what He came to say. He could have told much of the Unseen. But if one were sent as a guide to a company of blind men and women he would not tell them of things they could not understand. If there is no

after-life of activity there would have been no reason for His advent and His message. His presence was a witness to an organised spirit-land, and His silence additional evidence of it. 'If,' He said, 'there were no higher stage for you, I would have told you. Let not your heart be troubled. In My Father's house are many places for abiding in, and one is ready for you.'

We can infer from various allusions that part at least of the work spirits do is to influence and help those in the world. Service of this kind went on before Jesus came: His coming was simply an extension of it into the Seen. Once He said that He could have legions of spirits to assist Him. Spirits did come and minister to Him on one occasion. There is no doubt that if the veil of the Seen were to cleave asunder, we should, as it were, see presences in the love-light moving and flashing about us. It is not strange that it should be so. We try to influence and comfort others now: how much more shall we seek to do this when we have greater capacity and power?

Here we reach a height concerning which only the spirit far advanced on its way is competent to speak. As a rule we are so engrossed with the Seen, our imagination is so meagre, that we are never conscious of the phenomena of the Unseen. Our spirit is like common glass that shows us

things exactly as they appear to our own eyes. It is only when it is cultivated that it becomes like the lens of a telescope bringing the invisible into view. The finer and purer it is the further we see into the kingdom of light. 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' said Jesus, 'for they shall see God.'

In this culture of the spirit lies the clue to many things which otherwise we cannot understand. It explains why those who walk in all the commandments of God blameless have visions. The shepherds who saw the messengers from the Unseen were men of simple but intense faith. It helps us, too, to understand what is often witnessed when such people are crossing the borderland. They have come so close to the other side that its light breaks upon them before they are free from the body. It is the spirit at its purest and best reaching out and seeing, as one sees afar the flushing of the dawn, the coming of the wonder and beauty of the Unseen.

## CHAPTER VI

### CALVARY

JESUS found the people among whom He appeared tired of things as they were and ready to welcome any upheaval which would bring about a reconstruction of society. Their chief desire was to be released from bondage to another nation, and they dreamed of a movement that would be backed by force. When Jesus exhibited power so great they not unnaturally indulged the hope that here at last was one who might lead the crusade, who would restore their freedom, sweep away all forms of injustice, and inaugurate a new era of well-being. Instead of doing this He went amongst them quietly, telling them that what was wrong was not so much their political position as their relation to the Supreme Power and the laws of life, and preaching a gospel of purity, humility, and peace.

There were many, mostly simple and humble folk, who heard Him gladly and believed in Him and sought to obey His teaching; but those in

authority, the leaders of thought and religion, the learned, all bound by interest and tradition, would have nothing to do with His gospel. It would, they saw, do away with their ritual and customs, the growth of centuries, and overthrow all their privileges. Jesus did not deny that it would turn the old system of life upside down. But that proved merely that the old system was not in line with the law of the Supreme Power and that it should be given up. His description of the position was both graphic and scientific. 'Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' By the broad way He meant the way of the Seen, observance to creed and ceremony, indulgence in the life of the senses—all obvious and easy. The narrow way is that of the love-law; not narrow in the sense that it is the way of difficulty, of exclusiveness and fanaticism, but because it is unobtrusive and simple and spiritual; and once entered it is found to be clear and straight and sunny, and to lead into an ever wider and more beautiful vision of the Unseen. But they could not understand it. He was a dreamer, an idealist; His yoke was too easy, His burden too light. Such a propaganda was too puerile for

them, a people of culture with an historic past. It was the faith of a child. Jesus admitted it. 'Yes,' He told them, 'it is the faith of a child. But except you become as a child and receive truth as a child you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

When His influence increased they became irritated, jealous and angry. They spied upon Him, seeking to twist His words into a meaning that would give them ground for a prosecution, but failed, and their anger passed into hate. 'The world hateth Me,' He said, 'because I tell it that its works are evil.' They determined to suppress Him by force. This is usually the plan adopted by those who, lacking the spirit of the love-law, constitute themselves authorities on truth. It is often followed by religious organisations towards persons within their circle who cannot agree with their creeds. It is, in reality, the method of the jungle where the only way of getting rid of an enemy is to seize it and crush its life out.

He knew what was coming. We marvel at this, but the marvel lies in our inability to understand how natural it was. His spirit was so sensitive that it was influenced by forces which left other natures unaffected. Analogous conditions occur on lower reaches of life. People who

are deaf and dumb and blind are able to detect the advance of a storm before there are any signs of disturbance, on account of their power of smell. Equally as wonderful to us is the action of the barometer. Take, for instance, an island in the tropics. The air is calm, the sky unclouded, but the people are hastily barring their windows and the ships in the harbour are slipping their anchors and making for the open sea. What is the reason? The movement of the mercury indicates that many hundreds of miles to the south a cyclone is advancing. The same thing occurs among the subtler forces of life. There are times when we experience depression of spirit amounting almost to agony although to ordinary observers the conditions about us seem stable and the outlook clear. It is the pressure of some approaching evil. When the crisis comes the depression lifts. So in a higher degree the spirit of Jesus registered the forces that were developing about Him and foreknew the tempest of passion that was to cause His death.

He suffered intensely. In body, because He was tuned to greater possibilities of pain than men, but much more in spirit. He had not failed in His mission. His message had been delivered: the love of the Father and the method of life had been made clear. Many now knew the truth and



these would impart it to others and they would tell it to their children, and it would pass from life to life and land to land and down through the ages. It would shine more and more until all the earth was illumined as with the light of a perfect day. 'I have,' He said, 'finished the work which was given Me to do.' But it was the shame of it for men and women that grieved Him, as it had been the shame of their revolt that had grieved the Father. The Father had sent Him to show how they could make their lives sweeter and happier, and the world a better place to dwell in. And they were treating Him like a criminal. It was not only an outrage on Him but an insult to God whose messenger He was. He experienced in all their sharpness the sadness, the bitterness, the sorrow of it.

It was the leaders of religion who, with the aid of hirelings, compassed His death. Arrested through the treachery of one of His own followers He was tried on a false charge, condemned illegally, and crucified. One cannot call it execution: the crowd was a mob filled for the time with a lust for blood; in the language of to-day He was lynched. It seemed a victory for lawlessness but it was in reality a triumph for the principles He represented. Throughout the whole poignant tragedy He acted up to the love-law and even in

the last moment of agony He pleaded with His Father to forgive the men who were responsible. They did not know, He said, what they were doing.

If He had been a link in the chain of life the tomb would have kept His body and the sphere beyond would have hidden His spirit. But He was not, and all that occurred afterwards was in accord with His nature and His mission. It was necessary that He should appear again to His followers in order that He might prove to them that He was what He said He was, and to cheer them and inspire them to carry on the work He had begun in the world. It did not matter how this was done for His task had been accomplished : He had fulfilled the conditions attached to it, and He had now greater freedom of action under the higher laws of which He alone had knowledge. He was the same and yet different, and His disciples knew that a wider gulf than ever separated them from Him. When their faith had been established, and they were ready to act as instruments in passing on the truth, He disappeared from their sight into the Unseen.

There is much in all this that science cannot explain. It may seem to lie in the region of the miraculous. But we have learned by this time not to be too critical regarding the phenomena

connected with the manifestation of the spiritual. We can only refer again to the vast territory of law which we have not been able to explore, and we may be sure that all that was done was in harmony with the principles in force there. It was not more wonderful than what takes place any day around us. We see a cloud or a dewdrop materialising apparently out of nothing. We did not always know how they were formed, but we know now. So with the appearances of Jesus at the end. We cannot understand them, but that does not prove that they did not happen. The world is like a child looking at mechanism which it admires but cannot explain. When it grows older it may find out all about it, and will smile when it recalls how it was puzzled in the old days.

Atonement

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

WE have been regarding Jesus as a revelation of the love and will of God under the law, but it is necessary to take note of the fact that a large body of religious opinion goes further than this. It claims that His death had a significance of its own, that the Cross involved the introduction of a special principle into the development of the race by which our position was made easier and our future was more assured than it had been under the law. This belief is embodied in what theologians call the doctrine of atonement which was enunciated after Jesus died. In view of the conflicting opinions on the subject, it may be well to quote an authoritative definition of the doctrine, one which may be regarded as expressing the mind of official religion. The atonement, according to a recent dictionary of the gospels, is the reconciling work of Jesus, 'whereby, through the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross once for all, on behalf and instead of sinful men, satisfaction was made for the sins of the world, and communion between God and man

restored.' The spirit of this formula is embodied in creeds ; its teaching is preached to the people in churches ; it colours the sentiment of their hymns ; it forms the basis of the allegiance which a large number of Christians give to their Master ; it is a view which brings them satisfaction and comfort and peace. That they cannot fully grasp all its implications when they try to reason it out does not disturb their faith in its truth ; they are content to consider it one of the mysteries of their religion and simply trust.

There may be less, or there may be more, in this doctrine than its exponents realise. We have learnt by this time to be cautious regarding matters which we do not fully understand, and to admit the possibility that the system of the universe may not be so hard and fast and inevitable as it seems to be. The instinct of humanity may be right in reaching forward to some great meaning in the Cross ; in believing that we witness in it something that was new and special in the development of the world, some awful sacrifice of Divine love involving, in a way we do not comprehend, the salvation of a derelict race. Our experience proves that the principle of sacrifice is deeply interwoven in the order of life, and it is possible that there may have been a manifestation of it, too high for us yet to comprehend, which was meant to justify the moral

constitution of things, or to be a substitution for some ultimate judgment.

On the other hand, if there is any interpretation which the human mind does not fully grasp it is not debarred from seeking others which will satisfy it and appeal to its love and faith and reason. That is what many of the finest intellects of Christendom have tried to do in regard to the theory of the atonement ; they have endeavoured to work out an explanation capable of removing the difficulties that are felt to be connected in it. Many do so from a deep sense of the need of a simpler and more natural view of the life and death and resurrection of their Master. Their experience is that the prevalence amongst a large class of people of what they term a mechanical conception of the Cross is hindering the coming of the kingdom of Jesus on the earth. It weakens their sense of responsibility and the necessity for working out their own salvation in line with the plan of God for the universe ; it makes them rely and lean on a method which seems to run counter to God's own law. They say we depend too much on a formula of theology, and practise too little the real spirit and example of Jesus.

As a result we have many theories and interpretations designed to bring our conception of the doctrine into line with the widening thought of the

race. Broadly speaking, the tendency has been to transfer the emphasis from the expiatory and propitiatory character of it to the purely ethical. It is recognised that there are psychological and physiological factors in our natures in which such a theory probably had its basis. When we fall below the standard of knowledge and conduct we have attained we are humiliated and ashamed ; we feel the need of being cleansed in spirit, mind, or body ; we recognise the right and justice of making atonement by the sacrifice of the tendencies that have led us astray ; we long to be reconciled to God. These impulses are better understood now, however, than they were in the early ages of the world. Then men were groping in the dark, and their gods were believed to be despots to be feared and conciliated. It was thought that the best way to win their favour or appease their wrath was to make them a gift of propitiation or expiation as would have been done to an autocrat of earth. The study of comparative religion shows how common the practice was, and how frequently human life was the offering. As religion developed, the theory became worked still deeper into the thought and life of the people. Whenever they ' sinned ' against the laws and regulations of their faith they made a sacrificial offering. This was believed to provide the satisfaction or atonement

required to wipe out their transgression and to restore the good relations that had been severed. That is to say, they passed on their responsibility to others. They made the latter bear the burden of sins which they had not committed. They compelled innocent life to pay a debt it had not incurred.

Even when a clearer vision of the true God and some knowledge of the moral government of the world became common, as it did to the Jews, the same procedure was found persisting as an integral part of the practice of religion, though many urged the uselessness of it and pointed out that what only found favour was the sacrifice of a humble and obedient spirit. It was Jesus, however, who, more than any, shook the faith of people in the efficacy of the system. He said in effect that the idea was based on a misconception, and that even if it were accepted as typifying the truth it had no influence on one's relation with the Father. It belonged to the materialistic order of ceremonial which hindered rather than helped one to come into touch with the Unseen. To a young man who remarked that love of God and man was greater than burnt offerings, Jesus said, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.'

Atonement by sacrifice, ransom from slavery, were common features of the time, and Jesus



naturally drew from them as He drew from other customs about Him, the illustrations with which He illuminated and enforced His teaching. It would have been strange had He not seen in this practice, which dominated the life of the people, means of emphasising His position and mission. So we find metaphors like these—‘The Son of God came to give His life a ransom for many.’ ‘My body broken for you.’ ‘My blood shed for the remission of sins.’ ‘My flesh I give for the life of the world.’ ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so shall the Son of Man be lifted up.’ All these are regarded as true in the obvious way in which He uttered them; as true and as applicable as when He said, ‘The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep’—‘I lay down My life for the sheep’—‘I am the Light of the world’—‘I am the Door of the sheep,’ ‘I am the true Vine,’ or any other figure of His speech. To strain such pictorial expressions beyond their legitimate implication is to obscure His real message

What many hold, therefore, is that the ordinary idea of atonement is a survival of the pre-Christian system: they believe that God so loved the world that He sent His son into it to teach it the right way of living and so to save it. Jesus was a reve-

lation of love and truth. He was sent, as He said in the parable of the vineyard and the husbandmen, because the world would not listen to its own teachers. There were people saved before He appeared simply because they obeyed the love-law and He came that more might be saved in the same sense. The efficacy of His mission, this type of thought contends, would have been the same no matter how He died, nor did the manner of His death affect the validity of the message He delivered. If He had died a natural death every word He said would still be true. That He was crucified on the hill of Calvary makes no difference, it says, in the relation we have always held to the love and law of the Supreme Power. Nor does our position in the future depend so much on the fact that He died on the Cross, as on obedience to the law of God which has existed for all time.

When professional religious thought on the subject is still so speculative, so contradictory and uncertain, it is clear we have not yet arrived at a full apprehension of the truth, and therefore we will not go wrong if we wait for further light. Revelation is continuous, and under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, the mists will clear in time. Meanwhile Jesus does not ask His disciples to accept anything that seems at variance with His example and teaching; He asks us only to love

and obey Him, and our duty in that respect is so clear-cut, that we can never be in any doubt as to what it is.

In any case nothing can minimise the significance and grandeur of the sacrifice which Jesus made, and the value of His life and message. Nothing can interfere with the underlying fact at all but only the words with which it is described. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh : He did suffer and die for us : He did reconcile us to God : He did bring redemption to the world : He was lifted up so that all who believe in Him may be saved from evil and from spiritual death : He did seal His witness to the truth with His blood. Nothing can alter the truth behind these phrases. The phrases themselves may have been misconstrued and become lifeless by centuries of repetition, but, if we care, we can read the right meaning into them, and make them again a living force.

It is significant that no theory which has gathered about the life and death of Jesus has obscured the reality and force of His position and influence. These are independent of all theories. As the ages roll on He stands out more clearly, more commandingly, more alluringly than ever. We may dispute about Him, decry His work, make Him nothing but a shadow of the past, but the fact remains that He has proved greater than any

*more influential*

one who has ever lived, more powerful than all sovereigns and statesmen and multi-millionaires, more influential than all theologians and philosophers and men of science. He is, indeed, the Light of the world shining in the midst of a darkness that still covers the face of life. Among the shifting phenomena of what is Seen He is the one factor that is stable and sure, for He represents the things that are spiritual and eternal, at once the love and the law of the Father, submission to which means for men and women now, as when He lived and before He came, the fulfilment of their destiny.

**PART III**  
**THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE**



## CHAPTER I

### THE TEST

*Religion (val)*

THE best test of a religion in the end is its ability to satisfy the needs of our nature. If it passes this test—if it clears our outlook, makes our path straight through the tangle of life, and leads us to peace of body and mind, we are justified in accepting it as true. Does, then, the faith which Jesus interpreted for us fulfil these requirements? Has the ideal of life which He presented satisfied the world, and is it attainable under the conditions that now prevail? Does it meet all the demands which we, both as individuals and as communities, have to make upon it?

*Christianity  
(failing)*

There are many who deny it. History, they say, tells us that although a section of humanity adopted His teaching no reign of love followed. The fact that over nineteen hundred years have passed since He lived, and that the world is as it is proves to them that it has failed. They point to the prevalence of evil, to war and its horrors, to the selfishness, hypocrisy, injustice, oppression, and cruelty that everywhere abound, even among

people who profess to be His disciples. They picture to us the sordidness and drudgery of life, so appalling and seemingly so hopeless ; the unequal allotment of what should be enjoyed by all, the terrible struggle of multitudes merely to exist. They refer us to the slums with their poverty and squalor, the martyrdom of women and children, the tired girls in shops and factories, the white faces peering importunate through the night : to the pale sufferers from all forms of pain, the crowded hospitals and asylums and prisons and poorhouses : to all the conditions that make for sadness and degradation and shame. And they ask why, if there is anything in the teaching of Jesus, life should still be so bitter and hard ? Surely, if it is true, they say, it should have had some effect by this time in softening down the angles of our natures, eliminating the ugliness and lawlessness in our circumstances, and bringing about better relations between us all. That it can show so small a result only proves to them that it cannot be the faith for which the world has waited so long.

One, of course, could reply to this argument by saying that the principles enjoined by Jesus are those which have brought about all that is good in the modern world. But it is better to come at once to the real issue ■■ we see it before us in



our own time. It is simple and clear. Do we realise what Jesus taught and do we endeavour to follow it in our lives? If not we cannot in fairness sit in judgment upon it. Before dismissing it as powerless to bring about improved conditions, we must first show that it has been tried in practice and has failed.

The truth is that we seldom give it a chance to prove its efficacy. The influence of it no doubt enters, more or less consciously, into our view of things, but the actions of most of us show that we do not understand or believe in it. As a rule we act on our beliefs. We believe that to-morrow will come, that trains will run, that our work will be paid for, and so on. If we did not we should not act as we do. If we believed in Jesus we should act on what He said. But we do not. We ignore His teaching, neglect it, or regard it as visionary and fantastic and impracticable. We may assent to it in theory but it does not govern our attitude from day to day. Some, on the other hand, admit His claims but only accept that part of His teaching which suits them and their circumstances. They make it half true, half false. This is as if we had a food given us which in itself sufficed for all the needs of the body, and we picked out some constituents and rejected others because we did not like the look of them and were afraid they

would poison us. Under such a diet some parts of our system would be starved, and the whole organisation would eventually break down. This is what occurs in the spiritual life of individuals and nations. The position we take up is essentially one of doubt and denial. It is the same as that of the men who persecuted Jesus and who crucified Him. Their procedure was illegal, the evidence they brought against Him was irrelevant or untrue. Our charges against His teaching have no greater basis in fact.

Suppose a man is given a house and garden on the understanding that he is to tend it and make it an abode of beauty and peace. He knows the laws of seasons and growth, but he ignores them and neglects to do what he ought to do. When the house falls into disrepair and the garden is overrun by weeds he blames the sun and wind and rain, or even the person who provided them. We can fancy him sullenly regarding the scene of desolation, spinning theories as to its cause, and saying to himself: 'As the owner does not seem able to keep this place aright, I his tenant do not see how I can do it or why I should try to do it. It seems to me that he would never have created such a state of things for me to put right, and as I cannot, and he will not, it must remain as it is. In fact I believe he does not exist else he would

not allow things to continue which I his tenant would not if I had the power.'

This would be foolish but it is practically the attitude we assume. We fail to see that the condition of the world is not a proof of the inefficiency of the plan or of the explanation of it given by Jesus, but of our inability to understand it and to rise to the height of our opportunity. Why should we hold the Father or His laws responsible for the state to which we have ourselves brought things? Why when it is within our power to obey the laws of our life and to make everything beautiful and orderly and ourselves happy, and we do not, should we attribute our failure to Him who put us here? If what Jesus, His ambassador, taught is true we cannot escape from the necessity of obeying it as He meant it to be obeyed, and if we have not the desire or courage to do so we should neither blame Him nor God for the lack of result.

Nor should we sit weakly down as so many do and long for another revelation, another and more striking display of power from the Unseen, in order that things may be set right at once. It is this longing that underlies the idea that Jesus may come again to earth. But it is wrong to look for another appearance from the Unseen when the first is not yet understood. Our duty is not to

await any second coming of Jesus, but to turn back to His life and message and try to re-discover His meaning and obey it. We do not need a new religion, but only a clearer vision and more direct application of the old. Jesus is with us. 'I am with you alway,' He said, 'even unto the end of the world.' He will, indeed, come again, but it will be in the sense that His spirit will yet possess all men and women.

Let us examine the conditions of life and see how far the teaching of Jesus is applied.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RULE OF FEAR

LOVE, as we have seen, is the supreme force in the world, the basis of all order, happiness and peace. It is not easy to define exactly what it is; it is the quality that belongs to God, the influence, the power of His spirit, the fragrance of His combined fatherhood and motherhood, essential, universal, potent, eternal. Many think of the word as implying something vague, abstract, sentimental; something that is all very well within its own limits; as an accompaniment, for instance, of the union of two persons in marriage, but not a factor of value in the practical affairs of life. This attitude, however, does not affect the reality of it or the certainty of its action. According to its presence or absence evolution proceeds or lags. It is the lack of love that causes much of the misery of the world. It is often the unsatisfied hunger to love and be loved that leads men and women astray. Lawlessness is sometimes nothing but a result of a blind and mistaken groping after that intimate relation of spirit which includes sympathy

and understanding and kindness, and all the finer influences of our existence. If these cannot be got in a right way, in the way they are meant to be got, they are sought for in a wrong way. If we all loved each other as God loves us the Kingdom of Heaven would have come. 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' That is what we are always praying for, though not with much hope: it seems a state too far off to be realised in our time. Yet it only means the reign of love among us which it is within our power to bring about even now.

The action of love is conditioned by law. Law, like love, has always existed and it never varies or changes. The slightest thing we do, the raising of an arm, the lighting of a lamp, as well as the most difficult, the building of a cathedral or a flight in the air, is governed by it. So it is right through all phenomena up into the region which we call the Unseen and the spiritual. Occupying at present a point somewhere in a local cycle of development, with powers working within a small circle of time and space, we are not able to take in the full sweep of its operations, but what we do know is sufficient for us if we only bring our thought and deed into line with it. To do so is to fulfil the object of our being.

Love and its servant law, what for conveni-

ence we have called love-law, is absolute: it knows no degrees of obedience. We either obey it or we do not; there is no room for compromise. We cannot adopt it in one sphere of our lives and shut it out of another. It is the one rule and test for all nations and individuals, for rich and poor, for the ignorant and cultured, for the man in the street, and for the statesman. Allegiance to it means living up to the highest point which our spirit has reached.

The principle, however, which chiefly governs men and women is not love but fear: not the love-law but a code which we have evolved ourselves and which is based on fear. Unlike the love-law this code varies with our stage of development and circumstances. What is wrong in one country is considered to be right in another. Some forms of lawlessness are overlooked; many are regarded as less culpable than others; some are dealt with by legislation, the worst, or those thought to be the worst, being classified under the name of crime and punished. Unlike the love-law also it is only enforced by brute strength. The governments of the world are maintained by the power of soldiers and police: our social systems are kept together by baton and steel.

Fear is a survival of the old state of animalism. It was fear that gave rise to the sacrifice of pro-

pitiation or atonement, and it still enters largely into the religion of savage races. Culture has almost banished it from the faith of civilisation, but it has gone on increasing in other phases of our lives. We are always under its domination. We fear the forces that work in our bodies. We fear other people. We are haunted by a dread of the future and the changes and possibilities it may bring—unemployment, poverty, ill-health, losses by separation and death. We worry about a multitude of things from hour to hour, brooding over many of them until they follow us into our dreams and harass us even there. Our nervousness and anxiety sometimes become so acute that they affect the machinery of life and lead to brain storms, breakdown of the nervous system, and self-destruction. As communities we are constantly in a state of apprehension about the interests of the nation, fearing declension or disaster, or the rivalry and designs of other powers.

Fear is ignorance, unbelief, a lack of correspondence with God and distrust of His method. It exists only outside the region of His influence. This was known long before Jesus came. The literature of the people to whom He appeared is full of the expression of it. Their teachers were confident in the righteousness of things. 'Fear not.' 'Be not dismayed.' 'Be strong and of a good courage :



God will not fail thee nor forsake thee'—these were phrases constantly on their lips. 'Of whom shall I be afraid?' exclaims one. 'In God have I put my trust: even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.' It was the object of Jesus to make people realise the truth more than they had ever done. How often He admonished His followers. 'Fear not.' 'Be not afraid.' 'Why are ye fearful?' 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' God is supreme. If we believe in Him and in His love-law working in the world life will have no terrors for us. But we do not believe and we do not realise that we do not believe. We try to live our lives alone, according to our own ideas, without reference to the real and only Power ordering things, and we fail. It is inevitable. There is no sound where there is no ear to hear, no light where there is no eye to see, no guidance where there are no feet to guide. And so we seem always to be drifting and beaten about by forces beyond our control, always in a turmoil of disorder and strain and alarm, sure only of being very weak and baffled and disappointed and sad.

## CHAPTER III

### CONTROL OF THE BODY

LET us deal first with what we call the lower part of our nature. We speak of the body and its organic activities as 'animal,' and rightly, but we do so, as a rule, with a sense of repulsion. We use the word as a synonym for degradation, and yet there is no reason why we should. The body occupies a position inferior to the mind and spirit, but it has been produced by the laws of the Supreme Power, and nothing which is the outcome of these can in itself be wrong. It is not likely that He would establish laws to bring about results opposed to the essential rightness of things.

One can understand how the body came to be placed under a ban. In the early days of the spirit men and women experienced, as they do now, a feeling of shame when they indulged in impulses which brought them again to their old level. But instead of realising that it was because they had fallen below their new standard, they blamed the body itself as being inherently evil and covered it with reproach. This was the basis of the idea of 'original sin,' which supposes that the flesh in

itself is vile and corrupt. It meant that men and women instead of laying the responsibility on their own violation of the law transferred it to the body. Some functions also were regarded as more animal-like than others, and indulgence in them beyond the dictates of reason more shameful, and this view, accentuated with the passing of the ages, at last became part and parcel of our thought.

God, however, does not regard His handiwork with our eyes. Although the body naturally becomes less and less important and obtrusive as our higher nature evolves, it has its own relation to the law and has still its own purpose to fulfil in its own place and in its own way. Its forces are not wrong in themselves and one is not worse than others. It is we who think we discern the evil and who create the discrimination.

Jesus gave no special directions as to the management of the body, because there was no necessity for Him to do so. If our spirit lives up to its responsibility we will care for its nurture, giving it plain and natural food, and just sufficient to keep it in order and efficiency. We will control all our appetites and only permit them to fulfil themselves in accordance with the purpose for which they were created. We will not allow them to pass beyond the limits set by the standard we have attained. There will never be any diffi-

culty in determining the standard if we are true to ourselves. It may be said broadly that the finer and purer our spirit becomes, the finer and purer and less animal-like will be our desires and our actions. Our aim in everything will be simplicity. This does not mean that we are to be ascetics any more than Jesus was, for those whose lives are in harmony with the laws of their being get the most enjoyment out of the exercise of their activities. They have the reward too of perfect health. Jesus lived a simple, sweet, and wholesome life, and it is significant that, though He was sometimes weary, He was, as far as we know, never ill.

If, on the other hand, we allow the forces on the lower plane to act without restraint they get beyond control, and we have the animal in us dominating the spiritual, a tragic inversion of the sequence of life. We cannot escape the penalty of such a derangement, and nothing is more obvious than that we do not. Most of the ills from which we suffer are due, directly or indirectly, to the illegitimate exploitation of the body. It is the cause of troubles the origin of which we little suspect—of temper, depression, mental inefficiency, moral shiftlessness, failure in business, adversity, degeneracy, suicide. It is not possible that the rule of the animal can be otherwise but disastrous to beings in a higher state of existence.

At the risk of repetition it may be well to empha-

sise this aspect of our life. The effect of our acts do not end with ourselves. We are all links in the chain of existence and we touch others at every point : one who transgresses the love-law spreads evil far and wide. Our health determines our moods and our moods influence our handiwork and colour our art and our literature. The joyousness, serenity, and sanity of the teaching of Jesus was the result of His perfect relation to the will of His Father : much of the philosophy of the world is the outcome of dyspepsia, satiety, malnutrition, or other morbid phases of our nature. Our acts sink deeper and further into the mechanism of life than we realise. Our children are what we make them. We would not consciously impose upon them weakness and disease, and yet we are always doing this by our self-indulgence, because we forget or ignore the law that the sins we commit will inevitably be visited upon them. Science tells us that there is scarcely a child born within the area of civilisation who does not inherit some defect of body as a result of the methods of life of those from whom he derives his existence. We need not blame the law for this, for if the law were obeyed the evil would gradually be eliminated.

When the spirit has only a loose hold on the reins of authority we are liable to do the things that we know we ought not to do. A thought, a glance, a word, a sound, a perfume, a gesture is sufficient to

stir up the impulses and energies of the animal. This is what we call temptation—the sudden leap into activity of the tendencies or habits we have established. Temptation is not, as many imagine, something that affects us from outside the normal sphere: it is the result of the conditions that exist in ourselves. If there were no tendency or craving in the first place there would be no temptation. Granting this, it is obvious that we have all a responsibility one to another. We may be saviours or tempters of others. We may influence them to overcome their weakness and to rise into closer correspondence with the love-law. We may, on the other hand, speak or write or act in such a way as to induce them to sink lower into animalism. Newspapers, books, pictures, concerts, theatres, for instance, are not wrong in themselves, but they are evil if they make men and women fall below their standard of attainment. It is one of the most terrible facts of life that many for the sake of money are busy in this way night and day degrading and ruining the spirits that are the crown of æons of evolution. With all their straining after ethical ideals governments are not free from blame. They not only legalise sources of temptation, but derive a profit from the legalisation. They, for example, license the manufacture and sale of intoxicants which lie outside the normal needs of our nature.

Alcohol, in the manner in which it is usually consumed, is a poison. It paralyses the higher powers and reduces the lower to the irrationality of the animal. According to official statistics the great majority of cases of assault, cruelty to children, murder, and other crimes which bring so much heartache in their train, are due to this form of intemperance. The curious thing is that we do not seem to see the wrong of the situation. As surely as intoxicants are sold and consumed, as surely have we to build prisons and workhouses and hospitals and lunatic asylums to deal with the ruin and wreckage they produce. We exact revenue from the violation of the love-law, and spend it in repairing and stemming the ravages caused by the violation. And yet we look out upon the world and wonder why there should be so much misery and suffering.

No matter how we may have come by any tendency that is abnormal our duty is to bring it under subjection. We need not be afraid of it or depressed about it. If we wish to get rid of it—and everything depends upon the honesty of our desire—we shall be helped by all the forces of the Unseen. Not at once, perhaps, but ultimately, with patience and determination and faith, the impulse will be controlled and the balance of power restored.

So with actual illness or disease. Whether these

are due to our own disobedience or the sins of others, we have first to get back into right relation with God, into the position of loving disciples, and then, if we ask Him and have faith, He will bring the higher laws—it does not matter whether we call them natural or spiritual—to bear upon our case as a physician uses the remedies within his knowledge. Some persons who live very near to God have, in virtue of their position, greater power than others to heal and comfort, and there is no doubt that Jesus meant His disciples to follow His own example and become healers as well as teachers. But we have lost sight of His purpose, and ignore the power of the unseen resources, and the blind cannot lead the blind. Religious bodies to-day devote themselves only to preaching and teaching, and believe that healing does not come within their province despite the clear direction given by Jesus. They restrict the word ‘sin’ to a narrow segment of offences, not realising that it includes all violations of law on every plane of life, and that it is their duty to save men and women from the effects of these, to redeem them, as Jesus did.

It would help us to keep within the sphere of perfect action if we knew more about the mechanism of the body. It is, to most of us, a mystery. We leave it to specialists who make the cure of its disorders a profession. The consciousness of some



functions we continue to thrust shamefacedly from us, though they are among the most powerful factors influencing our lives. In the circumstances it is not surprising that so delicate and complex an organisation should sometimes go wrong. When this happens we call in the doctor, who, with his knowledge of it in health and disease, puts it right. But if we knew more about it, and if we obeyed its laws, we might have no occasion for his services. If we and the community around us kept in right relation to the love-law we should always be fit and well. It would be strange if it were otherwise in a universe of law and order.

Our attitude is, no doubt, partly due to our methods of education. Children are instructed in matters that are of secondary importance, and left in ignorance of how to live a clean and wholesome life. They ought to be taught, carefully and reverently, the essential facts about the body. It is the mystery of its operations that creates the fascination, and the fascination that leads, often thoughtlessly enough, to the lawlessness and the suffering. To know what is right for them to know, will not, as some think, stain the purity of their spirit. The truth of God cannot hurt: it heals and saves. A knowledge of it will safeguard innocence, impart strength to the tempted, and redeem and uplift the unfortunate who fall by the way.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AVENUE OF EVOLUTION

THERE is one function of the body, that by which we carry on the continuity of the race, which is specially a source of trouble to us. It involves what we call the problem of sex. In reality, however, there is no such problem : there is no room for any problems in a universe of law and order. If a difficulty seems to exist we may be sure that it is not inherent in the nature of things, but has been brought about by ourselves and is capable of adjustment.

Jesus did not tell us why men and women had been made differently ; it was not His province to do so. But He explained the law that now governs their relation in this respect, so that they might be sure of acting aright. The plan of the Supreme Power, He said, was that one man and one woman should come together in a union that was indissoluble. 'The twain shall become one, so that they are no more twain but one flesh.' Try as we may we on our plane cannot get beyond this : it is the law of our being outside of which we

cannot go without disaster ; it is the only arrangement compatible with the development of the higher qualities of life. Jesus pointed out that man had from time to time resorted to practices far removed from such a standard, but that from the beginning it was not so, for the law had always been in existence and always applied despite what had been done in ignorance or lawlessness.

The union is for a purpose accomplished within the limits of the Seen. It is life meeting and mingling with life, in order that new life may be evolved. It is the avenue along which the progress of humanity proceeds. As its object is high so the penalty for interfering with it is severe. Two who come together are taking a step which may lead them into a region either of charm or of misery. Many follow the instinct of their body under the impression that the physical attraction which draws them is justification for marriage. But this is a union only of one part of their nature and that the lower. Naturally the spirit must be mated as well as the body, the union must be one of the entire being as it stands at the height of its evolution. That entered into to gratify selfish desire, or to secure position or money, does not constitute marriage in the real sense, and as a rule it only brings suffering and sorrow. It is little better than an alliance of the street, the only difference

being in the amount of the gain and the length of the association. It is, indeed, not so high as the friendship of the animals in the wilds. For the animals act up to the limit of their nature, whereas men and women who marry in this way act below the standard they have reached.

How are we to know when we meet the one who is the one for us? We shall know if we are in correspondence with the Unseen. We are often blind: we are often turned astray by a wave of passion in our lower selves, but if we let the love-law lead us we shall be guided to the right fulfilment of this purpose of our being. The only conditions are that each must love the other in the purest sense and that both must be obedient to the will and influence of the Father. A marriage of this nature will yield all the joy that life has to offer. It is the law and the law cannot stultify itself.

The ceremony which in our day celebrates the act does not constitute the marriage. That is a custom of our own. It is not the ceremony that unites but the union that occasions the ceremony. It is the law of the Father that binds, not any formula of humanity. Neither the State nor the clergyman can unite two persons into one flesh; all they can do is to recognise the fact and to surround it with precautions in the interests of social

order. This, naturally, is essential in the present state of things on the earth. We are not advanced enough to do away with the rough-and-ready laws devised to safeguard the wellbeing of the community. We need all the help we can as we climb the ascent of evolution and everything that aids us is good and acceptable. Jesus often pointed this out and He Himself conformed to the customs in vogue at the time He lived. The ceremony which accompanies marriage, whatever form it takes, is, therefore, necessary not merely as a symbol and consecration, but as a barrier against lawlessness. The time when it can be dispensed with is so far distant that it need not enter into our thought or outlook.

When a marriage fulfils the conditions of the law it is not a sense of legal obligation that maintains the union but the love that underlies it. When there is no love for one another and no obedience to the love-law the constraint of the legal tie is slight and there is always the temptation to ignore it. It is often argued that in such a case people should be at liberty to seek a love-union elsewhere. If there is no love, there cannot, it is said, be any marriage in the real sense. Many put the idea into practice whether they believe it or not. Craving for love and sympathy they enter into some new and secret union with whoever

responds to the call of their nature. Others do this in sheer wantonness. But the law of God binds more strongly than that of men, and what is accomplished according to it cannot be undone for our convenience. We can annul the ceremony but we cannot annul the union. Body as well as spirit—the whole nature—has been united, and what the law has joined man cannot put asunder. Husband and wife may go their own ways but the bond of the flesh remains. The wish for free relations, a result of unhappy marriages, is a wish for the conditions of the jungle out of which we have long since emerged. We cannot in the nature of things go back to a lower plane without disaster to our being. The process of evolution cannot be reversed without incurring disorder and suffering greater than that which our mistakes create at present. It is not marriage itself that determines our happiness but our attitude and acts within the marriage state.

Can the bond of nature, then, never be broken under any circumstances? Here we face a difficulty which can only be solved by our reason in the light of what we know of the law. Two of the biographers of Jesus make Him say that there is no exception to the rule. Another, however, in giving a report of the same utterance, adds a sentence to the effect that if a man leave his mate or a

woman hers and take up with another, the one offended against can have a divorce. Some think there is ground for believing that this sentence is an interpolation inserted afterwards in the text without authority. Let us suppose that Jesus did utter the words. It would mean that if men and women enter into a union outside marriage they interfere with the purity of life, and introduce confusion into its orderly continuity and that the act automatically severs the old union. It would thus be natural for Jesus to state that such a contingency had been provided for and our own law would be justified. But the more we think it out the less does this view appear to be in line with the truth. It is impossible to conceive of a law having any exception to its working. God does not create a law and then provide for it being broken. To do this would be an admission that it was imperfect or incapable of being obeyed in its entirety. There are two reasons which seem to forbid us entertaining the idea. The first is that such an exception inevitably opens the door to lawlessness. There is no doubt that the practice of divorce does so in our day. Is it likely that the Father would establish a condition of which people would be able to take advantage whenever their lower instincts obtained the mastery to the detriment of the rights of others and particularly to those

of innocent children ? The second is that if divorce were meant to be part of the scheme of things it would not be limited to the sin mentioned by Jesus. He Himself made it clear that violation of the love-law is violation of the love-law, whether it be in the area of the body or of the mind or of the spirit. The life of a man or woman may be often made more wretched and bitter by cruelty or indifference than by sins against the sanctity of sex, and the law, to be just, would have to provide more exceptions than one.

We must, therefore, accept the evidence of the two historians before the evidence, in itself doubtful, of the one. At first sight a law that takes no account of divorce may seem hard, but the justice and rightness of it are indisputable. If it weakened in its quality of absoluteness there would be little hope of ultimate obedience to it. It is the means by which more and more, as our intelligence develops, we shall be led into the perfect way. It will force us to look upon marriage more sensibly than we do now, to consider before we enter into a union with another the practical matters that affect our happiness—questions of disease, heredity, temperament, and so forth—to make sure that we are acting in all things in accordance with the laws that govern us. If we did this there would be no need or justification for divorce. Like other evils



and remedies for evil, it would die away before right thought and action, which would prove that there never had been any exception to the law.

The only hope for those who find themselves bound in a loveless union is to realise and obey the requirements of the love-law. Here, as elsewhere, the narrow way is the way to all that is good and glad. Let two who think they are mismated come into relation to the Unseen, and within the influence of the Father, and love will develop, and with love their problem will be solved. Even if only one does this the burden will be easier. Strength will be obtained to go on and a measure of happiness will be realised which no circumstance however difficult will have power to take away. Any other alternative will only lead to suffering and sorrow, bitter for those who sin, and twice bitter for their children. The broad way in the relation of the sexes is the way of broken hearts.

## CHAPTER V

### LIFE ON THE HEIGHTS

THE sins or violations of law on the lower plane of the body are usually termed 'gross,' and in our better moods we regard them with aversion. But those on the higher levels of our nature are just as 'gross,' and would be equally as repellent if we viewed them as we ought to do. They may be less obvious, but we have learned that what we see is not the most important part of existence. A base thought degrades us as much as a base deed : a cruel word may hurt the spirit as much as a blow does the flesh ; our peace of mind can be robbed as well as our pocket. The best illustration of the truth, perhaps, was that given by Jesus, when He said that if a man looked at a woman with desire in his heart, he had already committed the evil he imagined. This surprises and puzzles us, but the meaning is clear. The faculties of mind are, like the body, under the control of the spirit, and when they get out of hand and do wrong the result is as much an act and an offence as if it had taken place in the plane below it. We have sinned against

the highest we know, and the disobedience is as great as it can be.

The trespasses in this region are manifold: we name them pride, malice, jealousy, vanity, impatience, greed, cruelty, temper, and so on. They are the residue of traits belonging to stages through which we have come. They are literally the forces of the jungle still operating in us. People do not, as a rule, realise this. Our defects are spoken of as peculiarities of character to be palliated or excused. 'Oh,' it is said, 'he cannot help it,' or 'She was born so,' or 'It is his way.' They are not considered incompatible with service in the cause of religion: many, indeed, who believe they are far advanced in culture of the spirit often exhibit them to a greater degree than others who do not make the same claim. There are some who think no worse of themselves for their faults and even take pride in them. They are looked upon as signs of strength or individuality.

The law, however, takes no notice of our self-deception. Jesus was not speaking at random when He said that for every idle word we utter we have to give account. He was describing in the exact language of science the sure operation of the mechanism of life. We may not be conscious of paying any penalty, but we do pay it all the same. It may consist, for instance, in a loss of peace and

happiness, a lessening of the influence of the Unseen, or a front more open to the attack of temptation. We often wonder why things go wrong with us, why we seem to miss the best in life, never apparently being conscious of the fact that the reason lies with ourselves, in some deviation of our duty which we perhaps consider trivial or excusable but which is of moment in the eyes of the law.

Lapses of this nature do not affect ourselves alone. They cause as much pain and wretchedness to others as those of a more palpable kind. A look may darken hours or days for another, and through him for many more. A word may ruin the peace of a household. Our attitude at any moment is like a pebble dropped into the sea; its effects spread out on every side over wider areas than we conceive of where we stand. We are in this way perpetually touching and moulding the lives of others. All history, indeed, may be said to be a record of influence good or bad. We may ignore or deny our responsibility, but whether we do so or not the law traces it back to the hand that dropped the pebble, and in some way unseen, and to us mysterious, our life is the poorer for the transgression. We cannot expect the law to be gracious to us if we are not gracious in our relations with others.

As all such tendencies are the survivals of a part of our nature below the highest, our duty is to get rid of them and to cultivate the qualities that come with the development of our spirits. We know also what these are : meekness, gentleness, courtesy, patience, courage, and others. Against these there is no law. Their presence denotes control of the lower self and the activity of that higher self the best example of which was seen in the person and life of Jesus. Our endeavour therefore will be to copy Him. And we will do this not for praise or reward, but simply because it is the right thing to do. But the reward will follow as surely as it does in the lower sphere. We shall be brought into harmony with the will of the Father and the purpose of our being, and so secure that calm and peace of spirit which, although it passes understanding, is as real and practical as anything can be.

It may be said that this is well, but how are we to live up to such a height in the midst of the strain and hurry of life ? We have no time, most of us, to attend to the claims of ordinary good breeding. We have to look after our own interests independently of the niceties of courtesy and consideration for others. This is to urge the existence of one evil as an excuse for giving way to another. But God would never establish a system with which it

was not in our power to comply. There are no circumstances in which it is not possible for us to obey His law. It may seem hard at first to those who have been accustomed to do otherwise—all laws are hard if we have been in the habit of breaking them. But it is wonderful how easy it becomes after we once begin to practise it.

If we all practised it there would be no friction or quarrels or disputes in life, for it is a solvent that dissolves all difficulties. There is no room for strife of any kind in the kingdom of love. The ordinary courts of law are not needed there, for the code of Jesus is the only tribunal to which there is any appeal. It is curious when we think of it how a large part of the thought and energy of the world is used up simply in composing differences and unravelling the entanglements that develop in our lives, and how an elaborate system has to be maintained at great cost to impose settlements of those who refuse to agree. Justice is not a privilege possessed and dispensed by society; it is inherent in the scheme of the universe, and each of us has the right to it in the nature of things. It is the relation that we ought to occupy to one another, the state that would exist if, in the words of Jesus, we all did to others what we would like others to do to us. In such a case the word of a man or woman would be as good as a bond, as the

love-law meant that it should. 'Yes,' and 'No,' and 'I will' and 'I will not,' would be the basis of our dealings with one another, for all would be absolutely truthful and scrupulously just.

Suppose, however, that our attitude as individuals is not reciprocated by those who appear to be in the kingdom, who do not do to us what we do to them, that they take advantage of us? Jesus recognised this as a contingency, and told us that the one offended against may use all right means to show the offender where he has trespassed, and if there be no result he should be left to the consequences of his act. The law will work itself out for both. We may seem to give up something, we may seem to come off at a loss. But that is only to those who look on. No one 'loses' anything essential by doing what is right. It may appear so for the moment, but in the end in the highest things it is the loser who gains and the gainer who loses. Here, as always, he who finds his life loses it and he who loses his life finds it.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE USE OF FORCE

THE use of force is not shut out of our life. On this point there is much diversity and confusion of thought. Many hold that only fanatics and fools discount or eliminate force as a factor in the affairs of the world. A large number of sincere Christians do not see how, as things are, the legitimate requirements of authority can be fulfilled without resort to force. Others believe conscientiously in the policy of non-resistance and submission on all occasions, and quote the words of Jesus in justification of their attitude. The difficulty, however, is only on the surface ; it arises from a wrong view of the scheme of things, and a misinterpretation of what Jesus meant.

The universe is dynamic, not static. Force is, in reality, the basis of everything. There is nothing that we see that is not the result of force ; there is nothing that we do that is not a manifestation of it. The love and influence of God are forces of the finest and most potent kind. Force is the method of our spirits, we use it when we exercise



self-control, or resist temptation, or care for others. Where we go wrong is in applying the word only to the energy of lawlessness, a result due partly to the poverty of our speech. We have no terms to express exactly the significance of the force that is good and the force that is evil ; the force of those who are doing right and the force of those working in opposition to the law. The one is love-force, or the love-law in action, the power of the spirit : the other is evil-force, which calls to its aid the unregenerate agencies of the lower nature. The latter are more obvious, more ready to hand, and seemingly more capable of achieving what we want, but they belong to the sphere of existence occupied by the activity of the animal, and there is nothing to be proud of in attributes which we possess in common with the beasts. The saying that might is right is an echo of the jungle. The two are not necessarily dissociated, but might apart from right is simply blind momentum. We may possess brute vigour and strength, and cultivate a forceful, domineering personality as much as we please, but mere lustihood of body and mind will not bring us into harmony with the laws of our being and satisfy us and give us peace.

Our spiritual nature is not required to stand helpless before the activities of evil-force. That would be to dethrone the spirit and reduce the

world to chaos. It would be paralysing the process of evolution. We should be refusing to take our share in the work which we are required to do as part of the scheme of things, to help on the movement upwards to an ever higher and finer state. To stand passively aside means to let the past return, to allow the lower passions, like hungry wolves, to overrun the fair domain of spirit, to give a free field to those who use the agencies of mind unregulated by the love-law and to permit unrestrained liberty to brute force. We should be adopting the attitude which Jesus condemned in the parable of the talents. We are fellow-workers with God and we have, with all the powers at our command, to mould and train the still imperfect activities of the world. We have to beat down and discipline the lower impulses of our nature ; we have to withstand the pressure and intrigue of persons who have no higher law than their own interests ; we have to control and pacify the savage elements in human society. If untamed animals attacked us or those we love we should not allow them to have their way. Men or women or crowds or nations who use evil-force, attempting deeds of injustice and violence, are for the time being nothing but wild beasts, and the duty of the forces of the love-law is to check them and prevent them from carrying out their purpose. This has

to be done in line with the will of God, quietly, patiently, without passion or resentment, and, in so far as we do it in the right spirit, our efforts will succeed.

Let us first regard the subject in relation to individuals, and consider how Jesus dealt with it. As He often did He adopted the language of symbol the better to impress His hearers. He told us that we must turn the other cheek, let him who takes our cloak have our coat also, and go another mile with the man who compels us to travel one. What He meant is clear. We are not to resist evil-force with evil-force, but evil-force with good-force. In other words, we are not to retaliate in the temper of those who offend us. It is easy to understand why He laid stress upon this. Retaliation is the method of fear and lies outside the love-law. Followed in the early stages of our development it later became a tenet of religion. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, was the rule which then governed the relations of men and women. Jesus found it in operation when He came, and it persists still throughout the world. Among primitive races it is the law of payment, each act against a neighbour or tribe having to be paid for by a similar deed. Under conditions of civilisation it is called justice, or vengeance, or more plainly revenge. People who have been injured seek to pay back

the aggressor. Some adopt brute force as savages do, others inflict punishments through the courts, while not a few resort to more subtle, more indirect but not less vindictive methods. All, however, are of the same character, all are retaliation pure and simple, and to have recourse to them is to go back to the way of the jungle and place ourselves in the same position as those who have done us wrong. It is to reject the higher force of the love-law in favour of the lower force of lawlessness.

The life of Jesus bears out what has been stated. He did not come to carry on a campaign against the evil forces that were prevalent at the time He appeared. The worst manifestations of these were not in evidence where He dwelt, and in any case they were incidental and temporary, local symptoms of a widespread disease rather than the disease itself. His object was a higher one ; it was to reveal the Fatherhood of God, and the beauty and efficacy of His love and law, and so quietly to change the thought and convert the heart of humanity. Naturally He did not adopt the weapons of active service. His sole power was the love-force in its highest form. His kingdom, as He said, was not of the world ; if it had been His servants would have fought. He lived and moved in a serener region where His relation to the love-law was perfect. In virtue of His position as the Son of

God, as the embodiment of the love and law of His Father, it was not for Him to use agencies resorted to even by His own followers on this lower plane. Here and there He implies the legitimacy of physical force, but only once did He actually adopt such means Himself, when He took a scourge and drove the traders out of the Temple. The point is that He never rendered evil for evil ; when reviled He did not revile in turn ; when struck He did not return the blow. He realised that perfect ideal which He was meant to be to us and which is our ultimate goal. He permitted Himself to be arrested and killed, because that ideal would have been lowered if He had used the methods of the world and organised means to avoid the issue by force.

Our attitude has to be based on His teaching. We are fighting a good fight, seeking, like Him, to extend the boundaries of right and to combat the activities of evil. But our position is different from His. We are on a lower plane and hampered by the heritage of the past, and the powers we have evolved are still imperfect. We have to use all the forces for good at our command, whether physical or spiritual, but only as the love-law directs. As we live in a world of men and women who possess the terrible privilege of free-will we may not always escape hurt, for many have no

scruple in calling the worst forces of evil to their aid. This, however, does not lessen our faith in the rightness of things nor our assurance that if we walk with God and Jesus in the way of love all will be well. The true disciple fears nothing in the world because there is nothing to fear. He goes forward confident that in all the circumstances of life he will be taken care of, and that if anything untoward does happen it will, so long as it is not the result of his own weakness or disobedience, only tend to his good. We take narrow views of the stage of life and the dramas played upon it. Things occur which, it appears to us, could be prevented by a resort to lower agencies, but our vision is limited, and we do not know the reason for all that takes place. We know enough, however, to be sure that if we keep in correspondence with God nothing can do us any ill in the real and ultimate sense. Even if we have to suffer and die in the interests of what is right it is not a failure or disaster but a triumph.

When we are injured the love-law enjoins that we must forgive those who have injured us, not once or twice, but as often as there is need, and not from the lips only but from the spirit. This, to many, seems one of the hardest things in the world, for it means to blot out all resentment, all desire for reprisal, all memory even of injury done.

Yet Jesus showed that if we do not do this we are on the same level as the offender, and we cannot expect our own violation of the love-law to be forgiven. 'If,' He said, 'you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will the Father forgive your trespasses.' This principle is admitted, in theory at least, by all. 'Forgive us our trespasses,' we pray, 'as we forgive those who trespass against us.' But do we realise what it means? Many who repeat the prayer daily would not dream of forgiving those who injure them in the sense implied in the phrase. And yet they wonder why life is so difficult for them, unaware that it is because they are not obeying one of its fundamental laws. Not forgiving others, they are themselves unforgiven. 'As we forgive others,' they say, and they are taken at their word and receive exactly what they ask for. If we are to be forgiven for our lawlessness, to walk in peace and quiet, and to enjoy the sweetness of life we must compassionate and forgive all who sin against us even as Christ forgave the lawlessness and ignorance of those who persecuted Him and compassed His end.

The love-law in its far-reaching exigency goes further than this. It is not enough simply to forgive. Forgiveness is, as it were, negative. We must love those whom we forgive as if they had done us no wrong. 'Love your enemies,' said

Christ, 'bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you.' We know this injunction but we do not act upon it. We think it asks too much of us. We can go a certain length but not so far as this. But the law never commands us to do anything we are unable to do: it never asks us to go beyond the scope of our powers. Jesus would not have said what He did had He not been sure of our ability to obey. It was to this requirement that He referred specially when He said, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect,' and we may be sure that we can attain to the height He described to us if we but try. If we tried we should find it so easy that we might begin to wonder whether, after all, it was the right thing to do, so liable are we to imagine that life must always be difficult. It is meant to be smooth and happy for us and it is we who have changed its character. To hate is to walk in a region of darkness and uncertainty, of reprisal and peril and anxiety, and all that makes existence wretched. To love is to walk in a path where all is clear and bright and tranquil.



## CHAPTER VII

### INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL CRIME

WHAT is true of the individual is true also of the community and the State. The principle of much of our social action is still that which operates on the lower stages of development, and is out of place on the plane we have now reached. It is founded on fear and retaliation. This is seen in the way in which we deal with those who offend against society. We seize and punish and crush them ; in other words we render back evil for evil. It is the animal in us paying back the animal in others, the exacting of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life.

Within recent years we have begun dimly to realise this. We urge now that punishment is meant chiefly to deter others from doing wrong. But this does not get rid of the evil in the system. It is fear that we endeavour to strike into people in order that they may not have the courage to break the laws. If fear of consequences, however, prevented us from committing crime there would be less crime in the world. In reality it has little or no effect. It is not the dread of retribution that

keeps us law-abiding so much as the knowledge that if we are not we shall fall below our standard of conduct and be shamed and degraded in our eyes and the eyes of others. Again, we seek to make the penalty equivalent to the offence, but the sentences imposed vary with the ideas of those who establish the law or those who administer it. A man is sent to prison with hard labour for stealing when he is starving, or for breaking one of the regulations made to safeguard property, and another is let off with a fine who has beaten a woman to the point of death, or brought ruin to a score of people. There is also a desire to soften the rigour of the system and make it reformatory, but it is still essentially punitive. Prisons and penitentiaries in which criminals are immured are places of expiation: the officials are men of iron chosen to see that the process of chastening is carried out in all its severity, and when the prisoners are supposed by some magic to have atoned for their sins they are thrust back into society to fare as best they can.

A better knowledge of ourselves and the laws governing us would show how imperfect such a system is. We are meant to be in correspondence with what is right. We are not, as is sometimes said, 'naturally wicked.' We are allied to an ancestry from which we inherit tendencies that will, if uncontrolled by the spirit, lead us back to

a state out of harmony with our position, but it is not 'natural' for us to go back, it is only 'natural' for us to obey the law as we know it at our highest. The aim of evolution is to carry us onwards into ever closer relation with the Father. It is our ignorance, our wilfulness, the conditions of life we have developed, that drag us down below the level our spirits have reached. This is specially true of offences against society which are almost always the effect of the conditions we have created—ignorance, self-indulgence, injustice, poverty, competition, worry, lovelessness, ill-health, and other evils. These are not natural and they give rise to other results that are also unnatural. The wonder is not that they produce so much crime but that they occasion so little. If they were removed, there would be no crime—there would be no justification or necessity for it. It is often nothing but the effect of tendency, habit, heredity, weakness, rather than a deliberate choice of evil. Criminals are made more frequently by others than by themselves. The magistrate who told a young prisoner that he was the victim of his circumstances, and that it was his parents who should have stood in the dock, spoke the truth, though he was only repeating what philosophers have stated from the beginning. It was what Jesus taught. We do not realise it and so we continue to punish men and

women for things for which we are ourselves responsible : we crucify them for not possessing what it is impossible for them to have.

Crime is a disease of the higher nature as real as any of the morbid physiological conditions treated in hospitals. It is atavism, a reversion to a lower state of existence, a revival of the beast in us. When a man commits a crime he is not himself ; he is suffering from a lapse which blots out responsibility and allows the passions of the animal to rage without restraint. By simply retaliating we punish the animal in him, but we also brutalise whatever spirit he may possess ; we deprive him of a standard of conduct. If this be done often we may kill the spirit altogether, and turn him into what we call an habitual criminal, one who is always at the mercy of his lower impulses, who, in the language of the medical psychologist, is morally diseased. To punish such a nature is useless ; it only makes him a worse animal than he was before.

The only method of dealing with lawlessness of this kind, and the only one which yields perfect results is, after mastering and controlling the offender, to put him under the influence of the highest discipline of spirit. 'Go, and sin no more,' said Jesus. If we followed His example, we should forgive offenders, entertain no animus against them, seek to raise them above the level of the animal,

give them a vision of the purpose and goodness of God, and provide them with a standard of conduct. Instead of handing the worst over to judges and jailers we should hand them over to alienists and physicians. We should separate them from others and put them under wise and kindly discipline in the same way as we put those suffering from maladies of the body into a hospital, and subject them to the rule and restraint of its organisation. Even under the system now in force, prisoners behave themselves well as a rule, and keep good health because they are out of the environment that induces them to do evil.

Much of this kind of work of rescue and cure is being done, but the task is heart-breaking and often futile, and it is not surprising, because so long as the conditions of life continue as they are crime will prevail. It is simply the symptom of a disease, and there is little use in trying to heal the symptom without taking into account the disease itself. If all in the community obeyed the love-law there would be no disturbance of any kind. It is the foundation of order and peace. There is no crime in the kingdom of the Father, and if His kingdom came upon earth it would cease to exist.

If the teaching of Jesus is applicable to the individual and the community, it should also govern the larger relations of the nation. There is no

sphere independent of its action : there are no two sets of laws but one law throughout. It is only by the practice of the love-law that a country can achieve its real destiny. Many persons say it is absurd to expect the State to guide itself by what Jesus taught. No nation, they assert, could survive the ordeal of obeying the Sermon on the Mount. How do we know ? The experiment has never been tried. No country has yet adopted the love-law as its sole authority and guide. But we get a hint from what has happened in the past. Empires have been founded by the sword ; they have grown rich and powerful ; they have passed away. On the other hand, races armed mainly with moral power have leavened and led the world. Education, intelligence, character have proved more potent than all the powers of the jungle. The nation that seeks after the right way and best obeys the love-law is the one that is most happy and prosperous in the things that matter. The mistake is to think that this attitude implies weakness. Weakness is fear and there is no fear within the dominion of right. It rather means strength a thousand times greater than any that can be derived from the support of the lower agencies alone. It is, indeed, the basis of all power. When the world-war broke upon us the British Empire would have been in poor state if it had

relied on mere physical force. What underlay the vast movement to withstand the attack of materialism and formed the real assurance of victory was the idealism which nerved the bulk of the fighters, and this was the issue and crown of the spiritual life and development of the past.

There is no difference save one of degree between a war fought deliberately for selfish ends and an offence by an individual. Both are crimes, transgressions against the law of right, enterprises of brute force. Just as people have to be safeguarded against lawlessness, so nations as a whole have to keep guard over the precious things that have been gained in the course of the world's progress—freedom, order, purity, peace. If an aggressive power descends to the plane of the animal and uses the forces there to destroy the spiritual qualities of civilisation, the higher influences can but rally and defend what is threatened. Such a course is the only one which can be understood or submitted to by those who, for the time being, are, in a sense, out of their mind. A nation has sometimes to take up a scourge, as Jesus did, to change a situation which will not yield to other treatment. The process involves suffering and waste, but in the present stage of our evolution there is no other way to save the spiritual treasures of humanity. And however bitter the experience may be, the

after-treatment of the offender must follow the line applied to individuals. Withstand, control, discipline, win, are the commands of the love-law.

It would be better if we had a truer perspective of war. Naturally its brutalities and horrors impress the imagination, and yet a state of peace may be, and often is, worse than war. Few realise the sorrows of civilisation because they do not reach us with cumulative effect. But within the area of Christendom the victims of the activity of evil are far more numerous than those who fall on battlefields, and the suffering and misery caused by it are greater than what is endured in time of war.

War, like other methods which are imperfect, will be abandoned before the evolution of the spirit. It will give place to understanding, reason, sympathy, forbearance, concession, all the qualities of the love-law. The nation that practises these will come to dominate the world in the highest sense. They are the simplest and yet the most powerful methods in the world and they will more and more control the actions of humanity. Jesus knew this and He spoke of it in His own unforgettable way. Looking in vision down the ages He saw a time we do not yet foresee, and scarcely admit to be possible, but which is coming as surely as the dawning of to-morrow, when the meek, those who rule their lives by His gospel of law and love, will inherit the earth,



## CHAPTER VIII

### MONEY

WHAT men and women fear most in life is the prospect of being unable to supply their needs and the needs of those who depend on them. Their chief solicitude is to secure an income and to store up as much money as they can as a safeguard against the future. That fear is a factor in their attitude indicates that it is not in line with the principles governing the universe. A little consideration will show why it is not. We depend for our existence on the sunshine and the air and the soil. The earth contains sustenance sufficient for every being who lives upon it : it is a storehouse which, from the point of view of our requirements, is inexhaustible, and if things were arranged and managed aright there would be no want or suffering or starvation. Many regard poverty as inevitable, and they quote in proof the remark of Jesus : ‘ You have the poor always with you.’ What He meant, however, He Himself made clear. His followers had been annoyed because a woman had, as they imagined, wasted something valuable that might have been

sold for the benefit of the poor. 'Why trouble her?' He said to them. 'She has done a good work for Me. The poor are always around you, and whensoever you will you can do them good, but Me you have not always.' He did not imply that the poor formed a feature that was inherent and permanent in the system of the world. Had He done so it would have amounted to a condemnation of the scheme of His Father and would have taken hope and stimulus out of the work of the compassionate and charitable and all who try to ameliorate the conditions of life.

Hundreds of volumes have been written in explanation of the principles that fashion and control our economic position, but the truth lies in the teaching of Jesus. It is not a system devised by man: it has been established by the Father. The birds neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet they are fed. The lilies of the field neither toil nor spin, and yet they are perfect in their beauty. We are on a much higher level than the birds or the flowers, and if we obey the laws that relate to our position it will be well also with us. What God would have us do is to work together in faith and love, and obtain from nature enough for our needs and distribute it so that all would share alike. The method of the process is immaterial. Jesus never burdened His message with detail:

He flashed the law upon us, leaving us to do what is necessary by the light it gives.

How we fail to live up to this ideal we know. There is, as yet, little trace of the love-law in the industrial economy of the world : it is, in the main, ruled by self-interest and avarice. The soil has passed into the hands of individuals who stake off what they own and do with it what they please independently of the interests of others. As a result, one half of humanity, broadly speaking, has more than it needs, and the other half less. There are multitudes who have not enough to keep themselves in health, and they have to toil so hard for what they do obtain, that they have no leisure to cultivate the higher part of their nature and are starved in spirit as well as in body. For this, society as a whole is to blame. Every child who goes hungry, every man who is unemployed, every woman who is overworked, every case of death through privation, is a condemnation of the system for which we are responsible.

Money stands for all that the earth yields : it is something that we have devised to represent the value of things and enable us to carry on conveniently the activities of life. It is not wrong in itself any more than many of the other devices and make-shifts we have evolved : our Father condemns nothing, however imperfect, that helps us on our

way. Jesus accepted it for the same reason. What He showed to be wrong was the abuse of money, the trust put in it, the spirit that looks upon it as an end in itself, and works and schemes for it. But it is just in this way that money has come to be regarded. It is considered the most important and desirable of possessions. From our infancy we are told that it is the one thing we cannot do without. Our system of education is largely organised on the assumption that our object is to secure as much of it as we can. Life is pictured as a race in which we have to strain every nerve to win the goal of a living wage, or a competency or a fortune. When we go out into the world we find that the contest is more severe than we thought. It is only by the sweat of our brow or brain that we obtain what is necessary to keep us alive and in comfort. Many will do almost anything to acquire it. It is valued more than truth or honour or purity or peace. Jesus Himself was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and for much less people are ready every day to betray their highest nature.

Let us stand aside from our ordinary way of thought and try and view the matter in its right perspective. Money and all it represents is something that belongs to the earth: in itself it is worthless. Jesus pointed out that our lives do not consist in the abundance of what we possess, the

money we earn, our balances at the bank, our investments, the fruit in our barns, the objects we gather about us. These have nothing to do with our responsibility towards God. They will not bring us any nearer Him. Nor can we take gold and lands and goods with us when we pass into the Unseen. Money naturally had no value in the eyes of Jesus, because He looked at things in the light of the love-law. When the woman used up the rare ointment in anointing Him, it was the spirit of the deed He took into account and not the cost in money. When the widow dropped her offering of two mites into the treasury of the church among the gifts of the rich He saw only the love that moved her, and He said that she had given more than all the rest together.

Hence His direction as to the attitude we have to assume towards the ways and means of living. 'Take no thought for your life,' He said, 'what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Seek ye first the kingdom of your Father and His righteousness and all those things will be added unto you.' This means just what it says. There is no exact equivalent for the Greek word translated 'thought,' but it implies remembering with grief or sorrow: a brooding care or anxiety. We are not to make money the chief aim of our toil or be anxious about

making provision for the future. If we seek first to be true to our position and destiny and continue to walk in the perfect way, all things that are necessary for us—money and food and clothing—will be added; not given, as a reward, but added as a matter of course. It may be simply because our spirit influences the forces below it, so that our mind becomes clearer, our hands cleverer, and our work more effective. But whatever the cause the result follows.

Most people, however, argue that it is nonsense to tell them not to worry about these things. They must take thought. They must devote all their energy to secure them, for everything depends on their own efforts. 'Seek first the kingdom of God?' they say, 'No, let us seek first to get on and secure a livelihood and position and power, and then we shall be able to have all we want.' The difference is apparent. They believe that these things in themselves constitute the reward, and that in obtaining them all the other things, peace and rest and content and joy, will be added. They invert the love-law and it is not surprising that the result fails to come out as they expect. It cannot be otherwise. We cannot disobey the law and at the same time derive the benefits of obeying it. It is a penalty and not a reward that follows. We cannot reverse a process and at the same time enjoy

the fruits of it. Men and women may achieve all they desire, may become rich and influential, but if they never possess anything beyond their wealth and power they are not successful in the right sense. They may have accumulated much of what is considered of value by others, but in the process they will have robbed themselves of all that makes life real and sweet and eternal. Jesus told a story of a man who became wealthy at the expense of his higher life. His goods outgrew the capacity of his storehouses and he planned new and larger buildings, and looked forward to enjoying at leisure the fruits of his activity. But even as he made the resolution his spirit, in all its poverty of attainment, was called away. 'What,' said Jesus, with one of His deep thrusts into the heart of truth, 'does it profit a man if He gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

There is a limit to our ownership of wealth beyond which we may not pass if we wish to live in line with the principles of the love-law. Many pass it who consider themselves to be the followers of Jesus, including not a few who hold high place in the organisations of religion. They do not use what they do not need for themselves, and when they die they leave it to others. On this point the love-law is clear and it cannot, save through wilfulness, be misunderstood. It tells us that we must not lay

up treasure upon earth. We may ignore the injunction, we may manage to deceive ourselves about it and so evade it, but it is there. And the reason is obvious. To hoard up more than we require is to keep it back from the service of the Father. So long as there is want and misery in the world, we ought to help to alleviate and remove it, and if we can do this by using what we do not require our duty is clear. Otherwise we shall be condoning what is wrong. No one who realises the love and purpose of the Father and tries to obey His law will withhold anything that will promote the cause of right. That was why Jesus said it was hard for a man who is rich in the things of the world and not rich in the culture of the spirit to enter into the love-land. Once, it may be recalled, He applied the test. We can fancy Him looking kindly but with a touch of sadness at the young ruler who had great possessions. 'If,' He said, 'you wish to be perfect give up your wealth and follow Me'—give up that which is of no value in relation to the Unseen and rely on the goodness and care of the Father. The young man regarded his wealth as an essential part of his life, and this was the only barrier between him and the felicity he sought, not one which need necessarily shut him out at the last but one which nevertheless hindered him in his course. 'Ah,' said Christ to

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those around as he turned away, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' They were astonished at the words and did not understand, even as we do not, although He added the explanation, 'How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.' It was not money in itself that was the barrier so much as the young man's trust in it, his desire to keep and enjoy what could have lessened the suffering of the world. If he had gone a step further he would have attained his ideal. He would not have given up anything of real value or that was a part of his life, and he would not have lost in the long run. 'There is no one,' said Jesus, 'who has left all for the sake of the kingdom of God who shall not receive manifold more now and in the world to come.' Here yet again he that finds his life will lose it, and he that loses his life will find it.

Are we not, then, to acquire wealth or provide for the future? What is certain is that if we continue to walk according to the law, we shall obtain all we need. To ensure against contingencies in the days to come is lack of faith, and its effect may be to weaken our relation to the Unseen. We should go on quietly working from day to day in the assurance that all will be well. The greater the faith the greater the result. It may be difficult to believe

this, but that does not make it the less true—it rather shows how poor our conception is of the wisdom and efficiency of the Father's plan. He does not, however, put stumbling-blocks in our way. Life is never made needlessly hard for us. It is always better to trust Him completely, but under the conditions that now surround us He does not forbid us saving so long as we keep within the limits of the love-law. If we are able to husband sufficient for objects that are right and reasonable without thought or injury to health or without hindering His cause in any way we may do so. If we are aiming at higher service or seeking conditions in which we may live better lives, it is not wrong to put past the money that will enable us to accomplish our object. The love-law, in short, does not check our earning powers so long as what we earn is consecrated to the work of the Father. In that case it does not matter how much our income is. The only condition is that we must not make it at the expense of others. If we are guilty of this we retard rather than advance the cause we have at heart.

## CHAPTER IX

### COMPETITION

THE best proof that the ordinary attitude of men and women in regard to work and reward is wrong is found in the vast development of evil method to which it has given rise. Their first aim is to secure the means to live, but they do not rest content with this. Fear urges them on and they struggle to make as much as they can whether they need it or not. In doing so they do not, as a rule, consider the interests of others; they rather seek to get ahead of them, to benefit by their ignorance or weakness or failure, and those who are most successful are envied and honoured and feared. This spirit has spread beyond the area of life in which money is the prize and now affects the whole field of our activity. In almost everything we do we try to outstrip and beat others: to reach the chief place rather than the second or last. And what impels us is not so much thought for the things that are of real and permanent value, as the pride and glory of the result and the advantages it brings.

What underlies our activity is usually spoken of

as ambition or emulation, and is looked upon as harmless and even praiseworthy. In reality it is rivalry, antagonism, conflict. It is the principle of competition. What competition is we seldom stop to consider. We accept it as something which somehow or other is natural and right though we cannot understand why it should be so, or why it should form part of the world-plan. Economists puzzle over it and seek to explain and justify and regulate it. It is necessary, they say, as a stimulus without which we should make no advance in industry, art, and science. This means that we must be forced into activity and development. If such were the case we should be warranted in attributing to the Supreme Power much of the sorrow and suffering we endure. But it is something higher than competition that is drawing us upwards. Competition does not exist within the sphere of the love-law. It works outside. It is opposition to the law, lawlessness, an outrage on the order and beauty of the scheme of things. It is the method of a time we have left behind : literally the habit of the jungle. We are, most of us, still living after the manner of the wild beasts, ranging for our prey in the forests of human action, and securing it regardless of all who may be injured or crushed in the process. It is, indeed, a stimulus, but of the same order as the bayonet. If we were compelled

to run by the prick of steel, we should not call it a natural way of making progress. Competition is an instrument of torture which goads us as we run and hurts us the more the faster we go. But it is we who have fastened it on.

It is impossible to estimate the full effect of competition on our well-being and happiness. It keeps us perpetually on the strain and takes away our peace and power of rest. We are never sure of any position we occupy, because the demands it imposes may call for stronger hands or cleverer brains. Millions of men and women are overworked and overtired, because they are obliged to toil on knowing that if they do not do what is wanted of them others will be put into their place. Their will-power is weakened and undermined by the struggle ; they have not the same strength to resist temptation ; and in the reaction after stress of work they succumb easily to the forces of their lower nature. Many become the victims of depression and despair. The only way out seems to lie in suicide, and suicide due to the effects of competition is not uncommon.

Competition is the origin of most of the inefficiency and disorder and waste of effort and time that exist in industrial life, the sordidness of our surroundings which is so pitiful and so hopeless, the failure of our plan of education, and the degrada-

tion of sport and amusement. It is the cause of much crime and disease. It is the source of the hollowness and sterility of the party system of government. It keeps the nations divided, calling for armies and navies, to maintain which taxation has to be levied, this in turn leading to further competition. The principle itself is exploited, prizes being offered to induce men, women, and children to compete against each other for no other object than to enrich those who promote the schemes. There is no end to the wrong it creates and fosters. So long as it lasts the claims on our powers and resources will go on increasing. It seems strange that men are so submissive to its demands, but it is because of the dependence upon them of those they love. They will bear and suffer much for the sake of wife and sister and child. Otherwise they would revolt. If there were only men in our industrial slums the pressure of their life would not be endured. Even under present conditions the time may come when human nature will turn in desperation and rend the system to pieces.

The only hope of the world lies in realising the plan of the Father. If the love-law were obeyed there would be no competition. We are so accustomed to think of the state of things at present as right and final that it is not easy to imagine any other. The very simplicity of the conditions under

the love-law makes it difficult for us to picture what they would be. It would not be our object to strive for money or investments or property or fame for their own sake because, as we have seen, they are not the real issues of life. We would seek to do what was right without fear or anxiety, and would leave the rest feeling sure that the rest would be right.

Such an attitude would not put a premium on thoughtlessness and sloth. To walk in the perfect way means the possession of the highest qualities of mind and body; such as never fail to bring us success in any sphere of activity. There is no room for idleness or inefficiency in the kingdom of the love-law. Patiently, faithfully, lovingly, we would put our best into whatever we did, aiming at quality and beauty, and seeking to interpret and further the purpose of the Father. There would be no envy or jealousy of others because it does not matter who does a thing for God so long as it is done and done well. Under such conditions the evolution of the world would go on more quickly than it does now. Most of us at present work because we must, and not for the love of what we do. We are, as it were, on a treadmill, producing a result in which we have little or no interest. Our lives are to a great extent wasted because most of our energy is dissipated in earning what, tested by the love-law, is of no value.

We have no opportunity of living the life we are intended to live. The forces of competition seize us and draw us into a vortex where aspiration and achievement are impossible. This is why progress is so slow. We think of competition as the motive power underlying advance. It is, in reality, the force that blights and paralyses. Progress has always depended on a few, because it is only a few who refuse to allow competition to affect their work. If all acted in the spirit of Jesus ■ broad stream of energy which now loses itself in the wastes of barren effort would be diverted into channels that would lead at once to the realisation of most of our dreams.



## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL LIFE

THE fact that life is individual and personal, that we each face God alone, and alone are responsible to Him does not make us independent of social effort or diminish the value of organisation. We are part of the unity of the universe ; we are all related, and combined action is inherent in the order of things, and a necessity of existence. Organisation is the method of God. Everything is organised, from the stars in their courses down to the cell that is too minute for us to see. There is no law against the organisations we form—there is no law against anything that aids us to carry out the purpose of the Father. The one condition is that they must be in line with that purpose and have behind them the spirit of the love-law. The mistake often made is to depend too much on the organisation itself, and too little on the love of which it ought to be the manifestation. We are apt to think that the method is all-important. Organisation with its officialism is considered a remedy for all ills. Whenever a change of circum-

stance is thought desirable, whenever there is wrong to be righted or good to be promoted, we meet and inaugurate a movement for the purpose.

When we think of the number of societies there are and the energy and courage put into them we are filled with wonder. Much of our united action, however, lacks the motive power which alone can make it successful. There is no love behind it. Without love organisation is like a lamp without light. A sure test of perfect action is the absence of friction and haste and worry. All true movement is without hurry and without noise, and this is more and more the case the nearer we get to the heart of things. The work that is regulated by the love-law is always quiet, strong, and effective.

The organisation of society in general is still governed chiefly by the law of fear, and the forces that fear develops. Its attitude is selfish and conservative. Suspicious of all ideas that come with the evolution of the spirit, it looks upon them almost in terror, as at some untamed beast creeping stealthily up to destroy its usefulness and well-being. What it imagines to be evil is in reality the love-law pressing its claims upon it, urging it to accept the truth because the truth will make it free and happy, showing it that the only policy worth anything is continuous development in accordance with the principles of right, and that it is better to

make mistakes than no progress. Society, however, will not listen. It is not unconscious that things are out of joint, but it will not adopt the only remedy that will give it satisfaction and peace. The struggle between it and the love-law is the history of the world. Men and women have always been seeking to surround themselves with the best possible conditions in which to live the best possible lives; it is the craving of the spirit to get into harmony with the environment natural to it. Jesus was, above all others, the leader of the movement. His life was a protest against conservatism, a crusade of love and grace against the laws and observances that cramp and stifle advancement and make us slaves to what is stereotyped and false.

Most of the social movements of the present day are, at their best, a reaching out towards a realisation of that faith in the goodness and possibilities of existence which is the latest fruit of our evolution. So long as they keep in line with the love-law they will go on capturing the imagination and winning the allegiance of all classes of people, and getting their ideas introduced into the practice of daily life. No opposition, no persecution, no philosophy, no combination of interests however powerful, will be able to prevent this. But if they depend on the application of lower forces alone, if they do

not adhere to the love-law, they will succeed no better than any other propaganda, ethical or economic, that lacks the one thing needful. Revolution and reform may be attained in virtue of the good associated with it, but new conditions do not in themselves bring peace and happiness. These only come, to communities as to individuals, by walking in the perfect way.

The unit of social organisation is the family and the home. It is here where the principle of development works at its intensest, and where the love-law finds fullest scope for its expression. The father, with his wisdom and strength and calm ; the mother meek and pure, and quiet of eye and manner and dress, the inspirer and comforter of all about her ; the children, healthy and joyous and obedient—it is through this channel of life that the world is moving upwards to God. Multiply good homes and you bring much nearer the kingdom of love. The service in homes is often a problem, but problems mean wrong adjustments. Adopt the right relation and they disappear. If a servant is considered a menial and machine nothing but dissatisfaction results. If she is treated in the spirit of the love-law, there is every chance of equivalent return. A mistress may, no doubt, be taken advantage of, because servants are not yet accustomed to the spirit of Jesus in daily life, and are not

always His followers. Often, she may, in a sense, seem to fail and lose. But on the whole she will gain. As a rule she will secure service in proportion to the love she shows. For real service of any kind is not given so much for money as for love. A mistress sometimes expects better work because she pays more than others do, but it is not money that produces the best work ; it is what lies behind it, the kindness and consideration and sympathy, all the qualities, in short, of the love-law. Such a view may seem ideal to many and they may dismiss it with impatience, but they do not thereby get rid of the law or minimise the sureness of its operation or avoid the penalty of trouble and care and dispeace.

So, too, in the organisation of business. If an employer adopted the love-law in his shop or factory, he would not make the acquisition of money his sole object, but would devote as much attention to the needs of his workers, and minister to their health and comfort. He would pay them well and give them ample leisure for the culture of the higher qualities of life. He would be patient with their mistakes and appreciative of their well-doing, and would take thought for their private welfare and the welfare of those dependent on them. Suppose they, on their part, served him in the same spirit, making his interests their own, giving

him the best of their mind and hand, being conscientious and careful in all they did. Half a dozen cases like this in a town would sweeten its industrial life ; if it were increased by thousands throughout the country we should have the social revolution that so many dream of. There would be no need for trade-unions or strikes or lock-outs. It is not impossible.

One thinks also of what is within the power of an organised community, if only it had a clearer vision of the love-law. We pride ourselves on being practical, but it is curious how often this practicalness is synonymous with what is uncomely. In the creation of our environment we do not use our highest powers. Our towns are, as a rule, concentrations of ugliness and noise. There is little in them to inspire and help the spirit, but rather everything to depress and harden it. Beauty and brightness are nerve-tonics of the most powerful kind. But we seem to have a feeling that what is beautiful and artistic lies outside the range of our workaday activity, and we keep it hidden away in our homes—and not always there—or in museums, or display it in resorts which we frequent for recreation. Why should not everything that is necessary to carry on our civilisation be made to delight and stimulate ? Sometimes there rise, for our amusement and instruction, cities of palaces and

gardens perfect in their equipment of all that skill and taste can devise. Why, if man can do this, if he is able to organise and establish an exhibition in which beauty of form and colour are dominant, is he ever satisfied with less—why should it be beyond the limit of his accomplishment to build in similar style, but in more enduring material, the cities of his occupation? What we spend in making things as they are, could be spent equally well in making them what they ought to be. It is not, however, a question of money, for money has only disfigured the world, but of love and service. Even if it were a question of money there would be enough to do all that is required. No one can deny that, after seeing nations spending millions a day for years in destroying life and property. Life under better conditions would take on a different hue; our outlook would be more cheerful; our work would be easier; there would be less friction and dullness and temper.

The larger organisation of national government is defective even in the eyes of many who regard it from lower levels than the spiritual. The system of political parties embodies some of the worst elements of competition, and is one of the causes why such slow progress is being made towards the realisation of the ideals of Jesus. The fact that during the Great War it was abandoned in order

that the highest interests of the country might be conserved, indicated a consciousness of its imperfection. It is not by the conflict of opinion, by diplomacy and intrigue, that the affairs of a nation can be carried on with the success which matters, but by open and straightforward dealing and simple obedience to what is right.

It may be difficult to change our views in these and other matters until there is a change in the method of educating the youth of our race. Whatever may be the ideals of the teachers our system of education in practical effect deals only with a part of our nature. Attention is concentrated on the mind, because the fear of life urges the need of earning money and of 'getting on.' It is, therefore, the main object to train the mind into the condition that will best enable it to take part in the material struggle. Children are taught collectively a number of miscellaneous subjects more or less suited to their individual capacity, but in most cases the work is mere drudgery and much of what is acquired is speedily forgotten. True education would think less of the future career and more of the future character. It would lay greatest stress on essential things, teaching the young what the world is, and what human beings are, and their relation to the Unseen, and the laws that govern them and lead to a healthy and happy existence.



If they were trained to think aright it would follow physiologically that they would act aright. The other instruction would then give less trouble; it would be imparted as best suited individual needs, and body, mind, and spirit would thus be qualified for the highest possible life.

The root of many of our difficulties in organised effort is the separation of what is called the 'material' and the 'spiritual.' The idea we unconsciously act upon is that the two are independent and even antagonistic, whereas there is no dividing line. What we call the material may be lower in point of achievement, but it is dominated by the spiritual, the influence of which should control all our activities on every plane of life. Blame for the estrangement between the material and the spiritual is often laid on the forces of the former, but the organisations of religion have also their share of responsibility.

## CHAPTER XI

### ORGANISED RELIGION

MAN's thought of the Unseen and his relation to it have always found expression in organised form, and this has developed with his growth. At first his ideas and methods were what we call materialistic, and it was only very slowly that they became spiritualised. The world that Jesus entered was still full of religions ruled by superstition and legalism. His purpose, as we have seen, was not to start a new organisation of religion. His gospel was older than the world. It was coeval with the laws of the universe. Men and women had believed in the truth He made clear, and had walked in the kingdom long before His day. He came not to interfere with organisations but to change their spirit. If men and women realised God and loved and obeyed His law the forms and methods of worship would take care of themselves. When He chose His disciples and sent them out to spread His teaching He did not band them into a society or make arrangements for providing them with material resources. They were to be sowers of seed.

At the present day they would have been termed a disorganised body of men seeking to carry out a work under conditions that were impracticable.

But it was natural and right for an organised effort to come into being to carry out His ideals. There are times when some basic change is needed in the ordering of our religious life. As Jesus said, 'No man putteth new wine into old bottles,' and when the truth does not fit in with the old creeds it may have to be introduced into a new receptacle, a higher type of organisation. It may even be essential for an organisation, like our own bodies, to 'die' before it is able to enter on a nobler phase of activity. So the new teaching of Jesus found its home in the Christian Church.

When, however, the influence of His presence was no longer felt, and what He taught, so simple and practical, became less vivid to the mind, the tendency was to drift back into the old ways. His explanations of things were distorted ; fresh ritual and tests of faith were devised, and an elaborate system of creed and ceremony and external observance again hindered the life and growth of the spirit. This was called Christianity, but there was much more in it than what Jesus had taught. To some extent it was based on the ideas and authority of men who never saw Him. Its judgments were declared to be infallible, and all who would not

bow to its decrees were penalised or persecuted. The position became what it had been when Jesus was alive ; the key of knowledge was taken away from humanity, and those who desired to enter into the kingdom of truth were hindered. From time to time efforts were made towards freedom and simplicity resulting in the formation of new organisations. This process of disruption and subdivision has gone on ever since until the world is full of sects, each with its own formula of belief and its own standard of membership. Those that can trace their origin nearest to the time of Jesus claim a position of extra privilege and authority, though it is not in historic descent, interesting and important though that is, in which virtue lies, but in the extent to which the spirit of Jesus in its purity exists in them and guides their action.

When Christianity is spoken of, therefore, one has to be careful to note whether the term means the content of His teaching or the organisations, methods, and views which have developed since He died.

There are some who think such a situation is inevitable and right. Truth, they say, is a jewel of many facets each representing a phase of the whole. But the facets of a jewel are all related and harmonious, while the creeds of the churches are more or less antagonistic ; they make truth variable and

illogical and in conflict with itself, whereas it is a perfect whole. We have to remember that our knowledge of it is progressive, and at each stage of our development we have a clearer vision of what is right. No matter how the situation to-day has been brought about, we know it is not what ought to be now. We know that the Church, as the kingdom of Jesus, cannot be divided against itself, and that the present state of things is an anomaly. We know that dissension does not exist in the region where He reigns. The condition of the Church to-day stands for division, rivalry, competition, and therefore for inefficiency, waste, and impotence. It is not surprising that it makes so little headway against the agencies of evil, themselves so combined and powerful in their operation.

It would make a great difference if there could be one organisation of religion co-equal, not with creeds or sects, but with the kingdom of Jesus, one which would include in its view all that science on its loftiest peak can discern of the universe and all that the spirit knows of the Unseen, and in its fellowship all who, in the real sense, love and serve God and Jesus, the only test being obedience to the love-law; one that would in its institutions focus the highest energy of every member in each district, and seek to bring all around it into vital relation to God and keep them in health and joy and peace. Such

an organisation would have a wider range of activity than the Church has at present. It would be the embodiment of the activity of Jesus. The sweep of its service would, in short, include everything that love in His spirit could devise and develop to bring about the regeneration and redemption of mankind.

One ought to have a clear idea of what the Church of Jesus is. It is the visible manifestation of His kingdom, the outward organisation of it, composed of all who love and obey and serve Him, and who in the way best suited to their capacities seek to establish the authority of His teaching upon the earth. It is a living, glowing, active force, aggressive, evolving, expanding. Those who do not company with Jesus and are not endeavouring incessantly and enthusiastically to carry out His aims cannot be said to be members of it in the real sense. It is possible for the men who are set apart as teachers to be in the Church and yet not of it. Many have in their training been concerned largely with the doctrines and theories which have grown up round religion, with what thinkers think about truth, rather than with truth itself. No course of instruction in theology or philosophy will, however, give a man spiritual power. He may possess all the knowledge in the world and yet be less effective in this respect than one without education who

walks in the perfect way. The teachers whom Jesus chose were plain men in humble spheres of life, yet they had more influence than all the learned leaders of religion of their time. Culture of mind is not, of course, opposed to culture of spirit : when both are united they form one of the most potent forces for good. But the point of Jesus was that those who are purely professional, ' who walk in long robes and love greetings in the market, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, and make long prayers '—characteristics of mere officialism of all time—are without virtue in the real sense. Their efficacy does not depend upon their position, but solely upon their relation to God and to His law.

*members*

So with ordinary members. There are many who join the Church simply as a social duty which convention expects of them : they are members through force of circumstances, and then as a matter of habit : their imagination and inclination do not carry them beyond a more or less regular attendance at the services. It is probable that if they realised what discipleship involves, the demands it makes, they would not care to stand the test. So we may say that the real Church of Jesus is a church within the Church. If the elements which have no vital relation to Him were eliminated, there might be a smaller membership, but the residue

would be more powerful in influence and successful in achievement. At first everything might seem to be lost, but in the end it would be seen that everything had been gained. It is only when true religion lifts itself up that it draws men and women to it.

What Jesus requires as a condition of entrance to His Church are faith and love and obedience. The test of men is acceptance of a creed and submission to certain procedure. Creeds may still be necessary in order to fix and preserve what we have ascertained of truth, but they are temporary and provincial at the best, and they should periodically be adjusted. Our spiritual apprehension, like our moral standard, is not stationary, but progressive, and while the Church should conserve what is known to be true it should move on with the march of mind and spirit. Creeds, however, are retained long after they are out of date, while truth advances, taking with it the allegiance of those who value it more. Religious organisations which refuse to relinquish their rigidity of belief and system succumb. Such an event does not imply the death of religion, but only the suicide of an organisation.

It may not be an indication of irreligion if a man or woman declines to subscribe to official forms of faith. There are many outside the Church who possess the spirit which Jesus requires for citizenship in His kingdom. Others who have had this in



large degree have yet been denied admission to or expelled from a particular church because they have advanced beyond the line of thought drawn by its creed. Even yet the pitiful tragedy of a heresy-hunt is sometimes enacted. As if we, with our small knowledge and vision, can limit the expansion of truth or lay down its ultimate terms ; as if God placed the custody of it in any single company of men. Jesus Himself was a victim of such a vendetta and He anticipated the same fate for His disciples. ' They shall put you out of the synagogues,' He said. ' The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service, because they have not known the Father or Me.' How true the forecast was history proves. At the same time we have to remember that He said in effect, ' It becomes men and women to fall into line with all that is good and helpful,' and that to avoid being a stumbling-block to others we have to ally ourselves to His Church, imperfect though its present condition may be, and although we may not agree with all it does and have ideas regarding its ritual and rites that are different from those officially held.

It is equally true that the Church itself should not be a stumbling-block to disciples. It should act in the spirit of Jesus and be continually adapting its methods, as well as its creeds, to the needs of

humanity. The policy of conservatism, so enthroned in its councils, is fatal to its growth. Such an attitude is evil : it is opposition to the will of God : it is a restraint put upon His plan of evolution, which seeks to carry us ever forward to higher attainment. The Church should face the world with the thought of to-day and not with that of centuries ago, and should speak to it in simple phrase intelligible to modern ears. The men and women who attend its services come out of the strain and trouble and burden of the throbbing life of the present : many of them are sick at heart, oppressed with the sense and shame of sin, perplexed and weary, and longing for cleansing and strength and guidance : yet often they hear little that has any relation to the tide of thought and feeling flowing beneath their silence and attention. In many places the Church is still under the dominion of the pre-Christian system ; its worship and teaching are based more upon the books of the Old Testament than on the teaching of the New. To step into one of its buildings is like stepping back many thousands of years. It is even possible to attend services and hear nothing of Jesus and the saving power of the gospel He preached.

What may be called the negative policy of the Church is due chiefly to two circumstances. The first is the absence of participation in its work on

the part of the majority of its members. They form a vast latent force which has not yet been mobilised in the interests of Jesus and His kingdom ; they have become habituated to the attitude of lookers-on ; they occupy the curious and ineffective position of being soldiers and yet not on active service. The Church has never realised that battles in spiritual warfare are not gained by officers alone, and the world will only be won for Jesus when every disciple, every member, takes some personal, passionate part in the campaign. The second is the fact that its affairs are very much in the hands of old men. Age brings what God values—wisdom, reflection, calm, judgment, but these are not all He requires in His work. He needs every quality which life can contribute. With age often come inertia, fixed habits, conservatism, unprogressiveness, and these are sins against His law. He wants more positive qualities—wants them most of all. He does not, as the Church does, look with disfavour on youth, its winsomeness, energy, enthusiasm, its spirit of adventure and daring, its capacity for hard work and sacrifice. It is the lack of such gifts in its service that makes the Church weak. Is it surprising that its victories are so few, that its progress is so slow, when its armies are made up of men who are, so to speak, beyond military age and unable to take part in the active prosecution of the campaign ?

This is why so much work that Jesus would have it do has slipped from its hands and been undertaken by other organisations. These may owe their existence to impulses received within it, and may be staffed mainly by men and women who are connected with it. And there is no monopoly of Christian service. Yet organised religion has lost much by its narrow ideals and set methods. It has to keep more in pace with the step of God, to be more original, more daring, more progressive, more universal. In a sense, it waits too limply upon God, expecting Him to do things which in reality He means it to do. It looks wistfully for revivals to change the hearts of the people instead of setting to with energy and enthusiasm and changing them itself. That is the work committed to it. God will inspire, guide, and help it, but it must accomplish the doing. When Jesus gave His disciples their commission He did not say 'rest' or 'wait' or 'expect,' but 'go.' His own life was one of tireless effort.

*beauty*  
There are other aspects of organised Christianity at present which do not correspond to the high temper and teaching of Jesus. Religion, for instance, is the most beautiful and attractive thing in the world, and the spirit of the Christian, his outlook on life, his speech and actions, the places he establishes for worship, should be in harmony with the grace and winsomeness of his faith. But the

Church is inclined to make religion sad and solemn and stern and ugly ; it environs life with the gloom of austere creeds and death with the trappings of woe. Religion is health, wholesomeness, happiness, brightness, sweetness, peace ; it is everything that is lovely and radiant and joyous : it is the innocence and gaiety and laughter of a child. ' Except ye become as a little child,' said Jesus, ' ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' It is the severity and hardness and dullness which we have associated with religion that shut out so many. They look shrinkingly into the region of life which is rendered so dark and dismal by those who make God in their own image, and say, ' I will not enter.'

Beauty is the touch of God in the world : it is one of His methods, but it has been largely ostracised by the Church, because of its apparent connection with evil. There is, however, no necessary relation between the two. Nor is there any cause for the decay of what seems beautiful in human life and achievement, except the lack of the saving factors of moral and spiritual worth. If beauty is used by the powers of evil that is no reason why religion should despise and reject it. It should take beauty and give it a soul ; it should make it minister, as it ought to do, to our highest needs. It will then fulfil its real office.

One would suppose that the buildings in which men and women meet to worship their God would be in appearance both simple and beautiful; that they would be the finest and most loving expression of human handicraft. This cannot be said of many, especially of those used by people who are reputed to be the most religious. In some cases the barer and grimmer the interior, the better, it is thought, is God honoured. While it is the spirit of the worshipper He regards it is also seemly that the spirit should meet with Him in an environment not less lacking in beauty and dignity than His own natural world.

There is nothing so sordid as debt, yet many churches are burdened with it. Anxiety and strain are never elements in our relation to God, and if they exist in a congregation it means that something is wrong. It may be due to various causes. It may simply be due to lack of efficiency. It is God's right to have the best qualities utilised in His work and the finest business genius should be applied to the management of its finances. Or it may be that the members do not realise their responsibility. Many of us act in the matter of religion as we would not do in our office or factory. We never expect to buy goods below their value, yet we expect to receive from God the rarest qualities of life, things, indeed, that money cannot buy, joy, peace, hope,

for a mere trifle. The true disciple will give to His cause the maximum in service and gifts. Here again it is the spirit He regards, the love and loyalty and effort, more than the amount, but if the spirit be right so will the amount.

The act of giving is a matter between God and ourselves. What we give to God is God's, and He knows, and no one else should. This is the teaching of Jesus, to which He referred again and again in the clearest and most direct language. All our offerings, He said, should be made in secret: naturally, for it is to God that they are offered and not to men. The contributions of Christians to religious objects often, however, receive the widest publicity. 'People,' it is said, 'like to have their gifts acknowledged; some would not give unless their names appeared; comparison of sums leads to greater effort.' So low have we fallen from the ideal of Jesus. Through lack of the faith which He wished us to cultivate, we descend to the methods in operation outside His kingdom, and work on the baser impulses and forces of human nature. We introduce pride, vanity, competition, and the fear of criticism into an act that should be the voluntary expression of loving and grateful and humble loyalty. God does not wish any gifts that are forced or cajoled out of us, and a religion which depends on such methods loses in spiritual power

far more than it gains in income. It cannot violate its own principles without suffering. No church should put more confidence in the good will of the world than in the resources of the Unseen, nor should it betray its Master for the sake of a donation.

Despite all the criticism which can be directed against the official religion of the time it remains true that the Church is still the most potent instrument in the world for moulding the spiritual development of humanity. It possesses an organisation unequalled in ramification and influence: it has many leaders and teachers who are real disciples of Jesus: it is strong in the goodness and heroism of a multitude of members. There is nothing it could not achieve if it realised its position and resources and possibilities. What it needs is a new vision of the greatness and the splendour of the purpose for which it exists, and a new conception of its ability to carry that out. It needs it specially now. The present is a time like that when Jesus came. The world is at a parting of the ways. It is looking and waiting for guidance, for a new manifestation of the spirit and teaching of the Master, and it is the Church which should accept the opportunity and, with all boldness, step forward and point the way into the future.



## LAST WORDS

WE have come to the end of our quest. We set out to understand something of the meaning and value of life, and to find a faith concerning it and the future which would satisfy us and give us peace. The horizon has not been swept clear, but our outlook has been widened to take in more of the area of existence than it has yet done. We have had a fresh vision of the beauty and logic of the universe and the love and law by which it is ruled. We understand better our relation to God, and we have secured a surer foundation for our belief in the Unseen. We realise more vividly the nature of sin. We have come to know how much of good underlies all expressions of religion. As we read the literature and listen to the psalm and song and prayer that have helped men and women in all ages and in all lands and do so still, we find the truth flashing out here and there in a way we never did before. We have become tolerant even of our own position. After all we know very little. Life has still its glamour and mystery. We have climbed higher, but height above height still rise above us into the

infinitude. What we shall see from these points when we attain them we cannot tell, but we are sure that it will transcend our conception of things now as much as that transcends the conceptions of the past. We need not, however, trouble about the future. Our view of faith at present is enough to occupy our thought. We have yet to enter into full possession of it. We have scarcely begun to realise what it means. We have to make what lies within it part and parcel of our lives, to act upon it, and by its power to build up a new heaven within our being, and about us a new earth.

We have learned that we possess a nature which has evolved continually from a beginning that is lost in the past. That which was first was not spiritual but natural. The basis of our life is the animal part of us. Originally the forces that controlled it were supreme, but, as we developed, these gave up their duties and higher qualities took their place. When the attributes of mind appeared they assumed authority over the organisation below, and now, the spirit, the sum of all the culture we have evolved, is in charge of both and responsible for their wellbeing. It is that part of us which comes into most intimate relation with the Supreme Power and has knowledge of His purpose and law and the standard up to which we are required to live. Upon it in the long run depend our welfare and

destiny. If it obeys the love-law we enjoy all the benefits of being in harmony with the scheme of things. It makes our lives orderly and calm and quiet. It gives us health of body and mind. It guarantees us security from evil. We may not escape the lawlessness of others, but even if we are taken advantage of or ill-used and persecuted, which Jesus Himself was, nothing that happens can affect our position in regard to God and our destiny. Sooner or later, if we continue in the right way, we come out best in the things that matter simply because it cannot be otherwise. Moving in an atmosphere of love there will be no fear in our lives, for perfect love casts out fear, and knowing that we are being taken care of we shall never be disquieted or discouraged in the slightest degree. At the end we pass on to a more intensive life in what is now to us the Unseen.

If, on the other hand, our spirit does not act up to its knowledge of the love-law, disaster results. Jesus expressed a scientific truth when He said that from within—from the spirit—issue all the forms of evil that defile us and affect the lives of others. If an engineer neglects or misuses the machine of which he has charge, and things go wrong, it is he and not the machine that is to blame. Our spirit is like the engineer. Or we may liken it to the leader of an expedition under whose guidance, if he be wise and

firm and strong, there is nothing to fear. But if he be weak and careless his party gets out of hand and dissension and disorder follow. If our spirits lose touch with God, if they fall below the level of obedience required of them, they cease to be able to command the forces beneath, and evil, or in other words, disharmony, disorder, and suffering ensue. It is because we give the lower forces such licence that our lives are so full of uncertainty, misery, and disease. We cannot be happy outside the best we have reached. It is against the law of our being. Nor can our spirits persist into higher conditions if they do not possess the qualities that alone persist.

The central fact in our outlook, however, is that we are not left to ourselves in our life-struggle. Behind the law and method and order of the world there is God, our Father, who cares for us, and there is His Son, whose service it is to help us and save us and draw us into the serene region of His kingdom. He is not a beautiful thought, or a dream, but a spiritual personality, overflowing with love and tenderness and compassion warmer and more intimate than anything we know of on earth, who uses the infinite resources of the Unseen for our healing and strengthening and comforting. It does not matter who we are or where we are; whether we walk in kings' palaces or in the tragic deeps of

city slums : there is none that His love and influence cannot reach and redeem. The hour may grow late and we may be far astray, but He is always out in the world and the whisper of His voice and the touch of His hand will lead us home.

There is nothing out of the way in all this save perhaps the natural and simple setting in which it is placed. It is merely a fresh point of view. Truth is always appealing to us to come up higher. 'Come and see' has been its invitation from the beginning. It was the plea of the wisest of old : it was the sum and substance of the teaching of Jesus, who knew more than ever will be known by men on earth ; it is the call of science and of the spirit to-day. It is made to men and women who are worn and saddened by the problems of life ; to maidens and youths facing its mysteries ; even to children still playing on its surface. 'Come and see the goodness of the love and law of God.' These are the twin principles of life, the magic influences that will, if we let them, re-shape existence for us. If they pass into our lives our lives will pass into order and beauty and strength. We shall be lifted above our circumstances ; whatever tasks we do will be made endurable and even glad ; we shall be transformed from drudges into heroes and heroines. For such a faith will give to each of us a definite place in the scheme of things and a conviction of power and destiny. We shall

know that every word we speak aright, every action we do well, is bringing nearer the kingdom and rule of love. It will impart to us a courage unshakable by loss or disappointment or suffering, and enable the most sensitive and delicate to bear scorn and calumny and the horrors of persecution and brute force. It makes even the thought of death a comforting thing and helps us, when we can fare no farther, to meet the change with a smile upon our face.

Let us, however, not underestimate the situation. We cannot look for a sudden change in the world. The effects of ages of lawlessness cannot be undone in a generation. The diseases ingrained in the flesh and mind, the tendencies transmitted from life to life, will not be eradicated at once. The point of view has to be shifted, habits have to be re-formed, new tissue and cells built up. But all that is wrong will gradually be eliminated in proportion as the love-law is obeyed. So strong is its power, that if it had free play it would soon counteract the effects of bad heredity, lack of training, and evil surroundings. The life of the race is like a river which has been fouled by factories along its banks. If left to the influences of nature the water will gradually become sweet and wholesome. In the same way, if we would but give the love-law a chance, it would purify and re-create humanity. The world to-day

is the expression of our thought ; alter our thought and the conditions will change.

Despite much that seems to tell us otherwise the process is going on. The movement of the universe, the tendency in this little eddy of it we call earth, is forward. Under all the fuss and talk and passion and fighting the love-law is busy. It may not be obvious. 'The Kingdom of God,' Jesus said, 'cometh not with observation.' We cannot say, 'It is here,' or 'it is there,' but it is at work. The power of brute strength and unreason is being controlled and is lessening ; the influence of the spirit is increasing. The world is more and more coming to be ruled by ideas and ideals ; in other words, by the power of the spirit alone. This is seen even in the claim of women for service in public life. Such a campaign as theirs indicates the passing of mere force from the sphere of government and the entrance of qualities of mind independently of its physical basis.

So, in the midst of the conditions about us, we see developing a new world, one not made with hands, but fashioned silently and unseen by the love-law. With deft and gentle touch it is blotting out all that is confused and unlovely and replacing it with order and sweetness and peace. Patiently and surely it is healing and eliminating weakness and pain, softening and adjusting differences, removing irra-

*Progre*

ationalities, breaking down the barriers of the nations, clarifying and unifying all effort and all ideas of right. Out of the process in the end will issue one people, one religion, one kingdom; a kingdom in which there shall be no more tears or suffering or dispeace, because all the former things which caused these, the ignorance and disobedience and lawlessness, shall have passed away.

THE END



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